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A survey of practices of schools in typically depressed urban areas from four large cities is presented. Staffing and program planning are discussed.

Practices should be established to help parents learn how to participate meaningfully in the education of their children. In preparing the pre-school child, parent aid may be enlisted through observation classes and co-operative nurseries. Parent-teacher conferences are important; group conferences and activities may also be used.

Another aim of these programs is to assist parents to develop their abilities and to improve home and community life. Adult education classes are given and family enrichment programs organized. Other programs encourage positive civic attitudes and try to develop indigenous community leadership.

Programs and activities aimed at developing school-home relations should be designed with specific characteristics of the community in mind. Areas for further research are mentioned. The appendix gives specific descriptions of participating schools.

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in depressed urban neighborhoods

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School·Home Partnership

in depressed urban neighborhoods

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School and Community Relations

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
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FOREWORD

One of the most critical problems in the field of education today is the need to deal with the educational handicaps of the growing numbers of culturally deprived children who live in depressed urban neighborhoods of large metropolitan areas.

There has developed in recent years a growing realization among educators, social scientists, and others that culturally deprived schoolchildren cannot develop their potential unless they are provided with more educational and cultural opportunities than they typically receive.

The educational handicaps of disadvantaged schoolchildren stem, in large part, from their culturally deprived home life. It follows that programs to improve the educational opportunities of these children are enhanced when accompanied by efforts to enlist the active cooperation of parents in the education of their children. Culturally deprived adults also require assistance in developing and improving their abilities, skills, and talents in order that they may develop into better homemakers, parents, and citizens.

This bulletin reports some promising practices for providing such services found in 20 schools located in depressed residential neighborhoods of 5 large urban school districts.

The Office of Education wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to the administrators and other school personnel who cooperated in the preparation of this bulletin.

Eric R. Baber,
Assistant Commissioner,
Division of Elementary
and Secondary Education.

Fred F. Beach,
Director, Administration of
State and Local School Systems.

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Chapter I

FACING THE CHALLENGE

Sixty-one percent of the American population in 1960 lived in metropolitan areas. It is estimated that, by 1980, 70 to 75 percent of the total population will be living in cities of 50,000 or more, or in their environs. Metropolitan growth has intensified many urban social problems, most of which have had repercussions on the public schools.

"As North American cities grow bigger," observes Havighurst, "they tend to become stratified by income, socioeconomic status, race, and other social characteristics. A process of segregation takes place through the moves that families make in search of 'better' living conditions. People who can afford it move to a 'better' section of the city or to a suburb, and their places are taken by people below them in social status."[1]

Havighurst refers to "the urban lower class school with its growing socioecomonic segregation" as "a 20th century phenomenon of the American city." This growing condition in the inner city is presenting school personnel with compelling challenges.

These challenges have led many schools serving depressed urban areas to introduce enrichment and remedial practices designed to maximize and expand the educational opportunities of culturally deprived schoolchildren. Such innovations include modifications and enrichment of curriculum content, improved instructional materials, new ways of organizing the school and the classroom, assignment of specialized staff personnel to the schools, and strengthened inservice training of teachers to equip them to deal with the problems of working in a depressed area.

The effectiveness of such programs and services depends, in part, upon citizen understanding of school objectives and their support of and participation in school activities. Growing recognition of the reciprocal relation between school and home in the education of children has led to increased involvement by parents as partners in the school enterprise. Organized parent-teacher groups that seek to unite the forces of home and school, notably the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, continue to grow and to exert increasing influence to improve local schools.

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[1] Robert J. Havighurst. *The Urban Lower Class School,* a paper presented at the Human Development Symposium, University of Chicago, April 14, 1962.

In addition, such practices as visits to homes by classroom teachers and pupil personnel workers, teacher-parent conferences, parent-teacher study groups and workshops, parent education classes, citizen advisory committees for public schools, and voluntary parent assistance in school activities are becoming increasingly important in efforts to strengthen school-home relations in local school systems.

Nature of the Problem

Since the end of World War II, population mobility and shifts in the large cities of the Nation have been characterized by the movement of middle- and upper-income residents to the suburbs and inmigration of unskilled and semiskilled low-income families, who settle in depressed neighborhoods of the inner city. Typically, these culturally deprived newcomers to the city are members of disadvantaged racial minorities or impoverished white citizens.

Neighborhoods which contain a predominance of low-income residents whose cultural patterns are at variance with those predominating in the larger society present extraordinary challenges to school personnel. Children from an impoverished physical and social environment bring attitudes, expectations, and motivations to the school which are often very different from, and which may conflict with, the values which the school, as a social institution, is attempting to inculcate.

Often, culturally disadvantaged schoolchildren are characterized by academic retardation and nonpromotion. They do poorly on tests of general intelligence and scholastic aptitude. In addition, they present discipline and behavior problems and appear to be apathetic and indifferent toward academic work in school and home-study assignments. These problems vary in nature, extent, and intensity among different urban locales, and different ethnic and racial groups.[2]

It is generally recognized that the home bears a significant responsibility for a schoolchild's attendance, motivation, and academic achievement in school. In depressed neighborhoods, culturally deprived parents, often preoccupied with bare economic survival, provide little if any stimulation of their children's intellectual growth. Typically, these parents do not prepare their children for the school experience, nor do they complement and reinforce classroom activities or plan for their children's education beyond high school.

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[2] Miriam L. Goldberg. "Factors Affecting Educational Attainment in Depressed Urban Areas," in *Education in Depressed Areas*, ed. by Harry Passow. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1963.

In this connection, James B. Conant's major conclusion in his study of school contrasts in the 10 largest cities in the Nation is that "to a considerable degree, what a school should do and can do is determined by the status and ambition of the families being served." He points to the deleterious effects on pupil motivation and academic achievement resulting from a culturally impoverished home life. And he suggests that the present blocks to children's educational progress in the most depressed areas of the large cities can be removed if their parents can be induced to adopt a positive attitude toward the school and if large-scale adult education programs can be made available to them. He calls for "new procedures" and "imaginative approaches" to achieve these objectives.[3]

And in her study of culturally deprived schoolchildren in one of the largest cities in the Nation, Patricia Cayo Sexton states that "in a very real sense, parents are responsible for the success or failure of their children in school." Observing that a child is a reflection of parental attitudes, values, skills, and levels of understanding, Miss Sexton states that "the schools must seek the help and cooperation of parents if they want to change the behavior of students." She further comments that "involving culturally deprived parents in school affairs, will require much more than written invitations or a sharp complaining phone call from the principal about their child's behavior." "It will require," she insists, "warm encouragement, school activities that are interesting, and programs that make sense."[4]

Use of Term "Culturally Deprived"

The term "culturally deprived" will be used in this study to refer to low-income urban citizens who reside in depressed urban neighborhoods, that is, the slum sections or transitional areas of the inner city. Many of these citizens are recent in-migrants from rural areas of the Nation who are disoriented to urban living patterns.

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[3] James B. Conant. *Slums and Suburbs, A Commentary on Schools in Metropolitan Areas.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1961, p. 25.

[4] Patricia Cayo Sexton. *Education and Income, Inequalities of Opportunity in Our Public Schools.* New York: The Viking Press, 1961, p. 111–12.

The term contains some unfortunate connotations—the implication, for example, that as a subculture in American urban society, the living patterns of low-income groups are a subtraction from, or a deviant form of, middle-class values. Some sociologists observe that disadvantaged in-migrants to the city possess many positive characteristics and attributes of their own, that it is unrealistic, and at least questionable, to have all children reject any deviations from middle-class standards.[5]

Nevertheless, "culturally deprived," as a descriptive term, has been widely employed in recent years both by practitioners and academicians in education and the social sciences. The term is useful in denoting an identifiable set of attitudes and behavior patterns which prevail among many of the in-migrants who settle in the inner city. Culturally deprived parents tend to be semiskilled or unskilled, with little formal education and low levels of aspiration. In contemplating their future and that of their children, many of these parents feel alienated from the mainstream of society. They have limited access to, and limited acquaintance with, the social amenities and such cultural manifestations as art exhibits, concerts, theater, "good" literature, and the like. Unfamiliar with, and often hostile to, urban living patterns, they tend to be in conflict with the values, standards, and norms generally accepted by contemporary middle-class society. As a result, their children, lacking opportunities and experiences provided by more advantaged homes, are handicapped in school. No ethnic or racial group is homogeneous with respect to these characteristics.

For purposes of literary convenience, the terms "educationally deprived," "deprived," "disadvantaged," "underprivileged," and "of a lower socioeconomic group" will be used interchangeably with "culturally deprived" in this publication.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this investigation was to identify, describe, and analyze some practices designed to improve and strengthen school-home relations in depressed urban neighborhoods of selected large cities. To achieve this objective, an effort was made to gather information on school-initiated practices whose direct or indirect purpose was to assist culturally deprived parents to develop positive attitudes toward schooling and to increase their responsibility for their children, the school program, and community affairs.

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[5] Eleanor Leacock. "Comment," in *Minority Group and Class Status as Related to Social and Personality Factors in Scholastic Achievement*, Martin Deutsch, ed. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, 1960.

Outline of Procedures

In order to carry out the purpose of the investigation, field visits were made to selected schools serving deprived urban neighborhoods in five large urban school districts. The following school systems participated in this study: Baltimore, Md.; Chicago, Ill.; Detroit, Mich.; Philadelphia, Pa.; and St. Louis, Mo.

The 20 participating schools in these districts were selected because of their efforts to improve school-home relations as part of a program to provide increased educational opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth.

The information for this study was gathered through personal interviews with selected members of the professional school staff in the participating schools. Interviews were conducted with principals, classroom teachers, and other personnel on the staff or attached to the school whose major or exclusive responsibility was to work with the parents of school children. These staff members included school-home agents, parent education counselors, social workers, health specialists, home economists, visiting teachers, and others. Whenever possible, activities designed to improve school-home relations were observed in operation, such as parent education classes and clubs, preschool observation classes, block club meetings, and the like.

The interviewees were encouraged to describe school-initiated practices which, in their professional judgment, appeared to be either promising or effective in improving and strengthening school-home relations. Because of the differences in approach among the schools in dealing with the problem with which this study is concerned, and because of the wide range of responsibilities assumed by personnel who participated in this study, the questions put to the interviewees varied widely.

Chapter II

NEIGHBORHOOD SETTINGS OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Local public schools tend to reflect the attitudes and aspirations of the citizens they serve. Schools which serve communities in which the residents are in favored socioeconomic circumstances benefit from both the economic and moral support which such citizens provide. Middle-class parents tend to take an active interest in school affairs and, sharing interests and value patterns similar to those of school personnel, maintain a relatively close relationship with them in support of the educational program.

On the other hand, in disadvantaged urban neighborhoods, school personnel must deal with the problem of establishing and sustaining meaningful relationships with parents whose socioeconomic circumstances are different from their own.

Neighborhood Characteristics

The participating schools were located in the inner core of five large cities, sometimes referred to as "gray," or transitional, areas. Located in the oldest part of the city, these neighborhoods were characterized by substandard dwellings which house racial and cultural minority groups. Typically, the residents were in-migrants from rural areas who found difficulty in adjusting to urban living patterns.

Many of the dwellings in these neighborhoods, built prior to or shortly after the turn of the century, showed signs of decay and obsolescence. Characteristically, some of the 2-story and 3-story private homes had been converted into multiple-family dwellings by absentee landlords and had been rented to families with many children.

Some of the participating schools were located in areas which had been or were undergoing dramatic physical changes. These were urban renewal areas, where public low-rent housing projects had been erected—either 2-story dwellings or, more commonly, high-rise apartments.

These neighborhoods were transitional in both physical and social terms. In many cases the multiple-family dwellings had been deteriorating for many years; some were already dilapidated. Still other dwellings had been condemned and were boarded up. The neighborhoods were characterized by high population-density and excessive mobility. The shift in the ethnic and racial composition of the population in some of the neighborhoods in which the participating schools were located had been swift and dramatic, having taken place within a 10- to 15-year period.

Typically, the school building in the depressed neighborhoods was an island surrounded by physical deterioration and social impoverishment. Bars, cheap roominghouses, vacant lots, dilapidated buildings, warehouses, garages, dirty streets, and unsightly sidewalks were characteristic landmarks of many of these neighborhods.

In urban renewal areas, low-cost publicly supported high-rise apartments typically commanded the view of an immediate area which included stretches of highway, a small asphalt playground, a modest lawn, and, of course, the lone school building.

Participating Schools

The participating schools consisted of 15 elementary and 5 secondary schools. All of the elementary schools housed kindergarten classes—eight of them housed grades 1 through 6; six of them, grades 1 through 8; and one of them, grades 1 through 4. One junior high school housed grades 7 and 8, and four of them housed grades 7 through 9.

Four of the 20 schools were built before the turn of the century, and eight of them, between 1950 and 1960. Three schools were built in the first quarter, and five in the second quarter, of the present century.

Of the 15 elementary schools, 5 had pupil enrollments below 1,000; 2, above 2,000; 1 had 1,700; and another, 1,800. In the remaining 6 elementary schools, pupil enrollment ranged between 1,000 and 1,500. In the secondary schools, pupil enrollment in 1 was below 1,000; in 3, between 1,500 and 1,800; and in the remaining school, 2,300.

The high pupil-turnover in some of the schools reflected the transient nature of the families in these neighborhoods. According to the principals who were interviewed, the nature of housing had some relation to mobility of residents. In the substandard dwellings, population turnover was generally high; in low-cost public housing units—

whether high-rise apartments or single-family dwellings—population tended to be relatively stable.

In most of the older school buildings, the 13 built before 1950, repairs and renovations, especially improved lighting, had taken place. The basic physical structure, however, tended to restrict the educational programs and services designed to serve pupils and the adults in the neighborhood.

The schools were typically located near the center of the neighborhood they served. Most of the elementary schools were within walking distance of the farthest homes in the attendance area.

The junior high schools drew pupils from a number of elementary schools and served a less homogeneous population than the more physically circumscribed elementary schools.

A few of the schools had been on double-session to accommodate the rapid influx of large families which had moved into the neighborhood in a relatively short period of time.

Status of Families

The families served by the participating schools in the inner city were typically recent in-migrants—Negroes from the South and whites from many rural areas. Many of the interviewees commented that often the newcomers found extreme difficulty in adjusting to an environment which contrasted so sharply with the one they were familiar with. The residents in the neighborhoods, some of the interviewees stated, had not formed a sense of identification with their new environment.

School principals and other members of the school staffs observed that many single-parent families resided in their neighborhoods, and they called attention to other evidences of unstable or disorganized family life. They further stated that many families received various forms of public assistance and surplus government food; others had improper diets and suffered from inadequate medical care.

Many of the interviewees also cited the apparent low level of formal education of parents and their inability to help their children succeed in school. Some of the newcomers, they said, appeared to be disoriented and maladjusted to urban living patterns, and were suspicious and fearful of the school and school personnel. And there were few neighborhood leaders who could participate in school and community affairs and inspire others to do the same.

The principal of *Ludlow* (Philadelphia) made the following comment about the area which his school serves: "There is little stability here and few characteristics of a traditional community. Families in the area are constantly on the move, and this movement is reflected in our exceedingly high rate of pupil-turnover, which was 85 percent this year (1962). There is a dearth of community leadership in the neighborhood and an absence of religious, recreational, or social agencies."

The debilitating effects on pupil motivation and achievement in a depressed neighborhood were described by the principal of *Dunbar* (Philadelphia) as follows:

> The children who grow up in this environment—an encapsulated Negro neighborhood—are generally deprived of the experiences that are prerequisite to maximum success in school subjects. The lack of cohesiveness within the family combined with the impact of substandard community life cause some children to develop a negative self-image or a lack of self-esteem. Under adverse physical and social conditions, still other children set unworthy goals and select the superficial symbols of success as most desirable.

The principal of *Dunbar* observed further that the greatest difficulty which the school staff faces in working with children and their parents in the neighborhood is that "motivational and aspirational factors that might lead to academic achievement are practically nonexistent."

In a neighborhood which had changed rapidly within a few years, a social worker serving *Douglas* (Chicago) called attention to the deep frustrations of both children and their parents who lived in the recently built high-rise (17-story) public housing units. "The recreational facilities in this area are very limited," she observed. "Parks and play areas, as well as community health services and cultural resources are nonexistent, and there is no public library in the district." She added, "The residents in the high-rise apartments often suffer from an acute sense of isolation. They respond to the seeming indifference of the outside world with an indifference of their own."

With respect to the high mobility rate of residents within the neighborhoods served by the participating schools, the principal at *Henderson* (Baltimore) called attention to the unsettling effect of such mobility on children and parents. "Some of our schoolchildren," he observed, "have shifted from house to house as many as 10 times during a school year. A pupil who has been in our school for some 5 years may have moved within the immediate area as often as 20 times." He added, "Some of the residents pay 2 weeks' rent in advance. Then they get behind in their payments, and just before they are to be evicted because of nonpayment, they move—but not far from their previous dwelling."

Other interviewees called attention to the many psychological problems which beset members of culturally deprived families. They pointed out that the problems faced by mothers who headed single-parent households were particularly acute. Many of these mothers found the many responsibilities at home, which they had to handle without the assistance and cooperation of a marital partner, overwhelming.

Thus, the experientially poor background of parents, their inability to provide their children with an intellectually stimulating home life in preparation for school, their lack of knowledge concerning ways to support school and classroom activities, and the social distance existing between them and school personnel were cited by the interviewees as some of the characteristic obstacles which had to be overcome in order to achieve closer school-home relations.

Chapter III

PRACTICES TO IMPROVE SCHOOL-HOME RELATIONS

Given the physical and social setting described in chapter II, what types of practices did staff personnel in the participating schools develop to enhance school-home interaction as part of a concerted effort to expand the educational opportunities of schoolchildren? This chapter will present examples of promising practices initiated by the various schools to reach that objective.

The chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section deals with administrative procedures, including program planning, administrative organization, staffing, and surveys of home and neighborhood conditions. The succeeding section sets forth various practices undertaken by the participating schools for enlisting the aid of parents in the education of their children. The final section describes a wide variety of school-initiated activities to assist parents to develop their abilities and improve home and community life.

In reading about these practices and activities, the reader should keep in mind the limitations of this study. Only a modest number of schools in a few cities were selected for study. Staff members in these schools had to deal with certain problems related to school-home relations which loomed larger in some neighborhoods than in others. Because of limited material and human resources, administrators were compelled to single out only a few problems to work on. Thus, the practices reported in this publication are examples of attempts made by certain schools to deal with problems accorded priority at the time of the investigation.

Organizing Administrative Procedures

Perhaps the most important responsibility of the school administrator is decision-making. The educational practitioner, faced with the challenging set of community conditions described in chapter II, con-

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ditions which inevitably and forcefully affect the school program, must make decisions regarding courses of action to improve educational opportunities of pupils.

In order to make appropriate decisions, administrators in the participating schools emphasized the need for educational planning based on staff consideration of needs, problems, and issues. Such planning invariably included discussions of methods to improve and strengthen school-home relations.

Administrative procedures for improving school-home relations varied among the participating schools in the five cities. Typically, such procedures included orienting the staff to the problem, providing inservice training, developing specific objectives, assigning staff responsibilities, and gathering information on home and neighborhood conditions.

The schools in Detroit and Philadelphia which participated in this study were part of the Great Cities School Improvement Program. Their programs for culturally deprived pupils were partially supported by the Ford Foundation.[1]

The program in one of the participating schools in District 11, Chicago, was also part of the Great Cities Project, and the programs in two schools in the same district were partially supported by funds from the Wieboldt Foundation, provided to National College in Evanston. The programs in the two participating schools in District 13 were not subsidized by outside sources.

The programs in behalf of culturally deprived children in the participating schools of Baltimore and St. Louis were also financed from public funds made generally available to all schools in the district.

The appendix contains more detailed information about the five school systems, the amounts and duration of foundation funds, the grade organization and size of individual schools, and the neighborhood setting of each school building.

Staff Planning

Staff personnel in Detroit took part in organized efforts to deal with the problem of identifying more closely with the culturally deprived child and his family. "We were acutely aware," observed the director of the project, "of the need for school staff to achieve more understanding and more objective reactions to the different background of the children, their families, and the neighborhoods from which they come."

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[1] The Great Cities School Improvement Project is a cooperative effort by the public school systems of 15 of America's largest cities to provide better educational opportunities for culturally deprived children in depressed urban neighborhoods. The school programs are partly supported by funds from the Ford Foundation.

During the summer of 1959, preceding the initiation of the project, a 1-week orientation workshop was held for approximately 100 key persons in the project schools. In succeeding summers school personnel new to the system have taken part in similar orientation workshops. In addition, staffs of the individual schools meet in discussion groups in order to focus more directly on the particular social conditions prevailing in their neighborhoods.

The workshop, according to the director of the Detroit project, can be a useful inservice training tool for informing teachers about characteristics and needs of the culturally deprived child and his parents. He emphasized that the participation of consultants in child psychology, sociology, urban renewal, and urban in-migration serves to broaden and deepen the outlook of classroom teachers. The director observed further, "The important changes in the perception of teachers toward the disadvantaged parent occur only as they become aware of and involved in the process of change in regular contact with them." He emphasized that "modification of undesirable attitudes and increased understanding come about through providing working relationships between school and home and a continuing awareness on our part that the staff bears a large responsibility for initiating good relations."

The staff of the Detroit schools developed a hypothesis that the problems of pupils with limited socioeconomic backgrounds could be effectively approached through modifications in organizational patterns within the school and in instructional methods. Appearing among the five objectives of the program was the following: "Involving parents and the community and enlisting their aid in supporting the work of the school."

Staff personnel in Philadelphia also participated in workshops which featured presentations by social scientists concerning the problems and needs of culturally deprived children and adults. Five-week summer workshops have been held each summer since 1960.

In 1960, consultants in the behavioral sciences met with staff members of the participating schools to help plan the project. The sessions were designed to develop staff insight into the causes and the nature of cultural deprivation and to highlight the particular needs of children from experientially poor backgrounds. In addition, inservice training courses were offered in curriculum development and instructional methods in connection with such children.

In focusing on parent participation in the school program, staff personnel formulated three objectives: (1) to motivate parents to assume increasing responsibility for the solution of family, community, and school problems, (2) to develop interest and understanding of the democratic way of life among parents through a program that would coordinate the efforts of the school and other social agencies, and (3) to identify and meet the unique and pressing cultural and social needs of the families in these communities.

The general purpose of the Value Sharing Project begun at *Doolittle* (Chicago) and subsequently extended to other elementary schools, including *Einstein*, is to promote the optimum development of each pupil by improving the influences which bear on the school, home, and neighborhood. The major goal of the project is to maximize the social values of the preadolescent child. The director of the project states: "Our purpose is to help each child, teacher, and parent realize his own worth by fulfilling his social needs so that his full energies can be freed to develop his abilities creatively and productively. We are concerned with every phase of the child's life which affects his educability. This concern leads us to include parents in program planning and encourage them to implement the school program in their homes."

[illegible] in the district. The director challenged the administrators and teachers to adopt a positive attitude toward the academic potential of the children and to "quit teaching by IQ." He illustrated the distortion that can take place when teachers are preoccupied with IQ scores of the pupils by recounting the incident of a classroom teacher who gave differential treatment to her students on the basis of their IQ's. At the end of the semester, she discovered to her horror that the IQ scores she had recorded were actually the students' locker numbers! The director challenged the principals and teachers in the individual schools to compete with each other in raising pupil test scores in reading, language, and arithmetic.

In launching "Operation Motivation," the director of the Banneker District observed, "We knew that parental attitudes and home conditions had much to do with the poor progress of their schoolchildren." He cited the irregular attendance of many schoolchildren, the crowded and noisy home conditions which were not conducive to study, and the generally spiritless attitude of parents toward schooling. "We realized," he stated, "that unless parents joined us in our efforts, gains in pupil achievement would be hard to make and even harder to maintain after the novelty of the first few months of the program wore off. The structure of our program had to rest on a firm foundation of parent understanding and support if it was to succeed."

During staff planning in the participating schools in Baltimore, school principals emphasized various methods of increasing school-home interaction. The principal of *Carrollton* organized a program with his staff that emphasized visits to homes by staff members. He explained, "We want to encourage greater parent participation in school activities, which is lacking in this neighborhood. Typically, a parent here only thinks of coming to school when Johnny is to be suspended for hitting someone in the eye. We want to get away from that. Our first job," he pointed out, "is to acquaint the staff with the imperative need of enlisting parent participation in school activities. Our primary method is personal contact through home visits."

At *Mt. Royal* the primary means of improving school-home relations was through publicizing an open-door policy for parents and other adults in the neighborhood. At *Henderson* the principal called attention to staff efforts in identifying "hard to reach" mothers of large [illegible]

Specialized Personnel

Many of the school principals called attention to the need for specialized personnel to enhance the effectiveness of communication between the school staff and homes in the neighborhoods.

In Detroit a sociologist employed to work with the project director contributes her specialized knowledge to program efforts directed toward improving school-home relations. And in that program, a new staff position was created—that of school-community agent. These agents are full-time workers in the individual schools. Some of them are professionally trained persons with fifth-year degrees in social work, and all are experienced in working with community agencies. They are primarily concerned with involving parents in school-sponsored activities and assisting adults to participate in community groups. A large part of their time is spent in working with parents in organizing classes and clubs held after school hours and in the evening in the school building. Since the participating schools in Detroit provide late-afternoon and evening programs and services for adults, the agents work from late morning through the evening.

The agents receive referrals from teachers through the principals and make home visits to determine how they can assist parents to help their child succeed in school. In turn, they inform the teachers and other school staff members about home conditions which may be adversely influencing the academic progress or behavior of a schoolchild. "The school-community agent," observed the director of the project, "is a solver of personal and neighborhood problems, impartial arbiter of school-family issues, a go-between, and an open forum for neighborhood opinion."

The school-home liaison person in Philadelphia is called a school-community coordinator. Unlike his counterpart in Detroit, he is not professionally trained. The coordinators are carefully selected in each neighborhood on the basis of their leadership qualities and the high status they enjoy among their neighbors.

These coordinators make both routine and special calls to the homes of the pupils. They perform many functions, ranging from informing parents about school programs and activities to providing direct assistance in the home on planning meals, housekeeping, budgeting, and related matters. During home visits, they appeal to the pride of parents in their children, suggesting ways in which parents can help their children succeed in school. They call on parents who neglect to send their children to health clinics to correct defects, encourage parents to overcome their apathy toward schooling by assisting them to enroll in classes provided by the Division of Adult Education, and encourage parents to assume increased responsibility for their children's social and cultural lives.

In the school attendance area at *Ludlow* (Philadelphia), where the population is one-third Puerto Rican, an additional school-community coordinator of Puerto Rican descent was added to the staff in order to establish more effective relations with the Puerto Rican families.

At *Doolittle* and *Einstein* (Chicago) consultants for the project include a full-time school social worker and two part-time parent-education counselors employed by the cooperating college. At *Douglas* a special staff for the Chicago Project (see page 69) includes a full-time home economist, a parent-education counselor, a full-time psychiatric social worker, and a teacher who visits homes after school.

Typically, pupil personnel workers cooperated with regular staff members in establishing and maintaining more effective school-home interaction. These professional workers assigned to one or more schools included school social workers, attendance officers, school nurses, and guidance counselors.

Surveys of Home and Family Conditions

In the participating schools, efforts were made to identify quantitative and qualitative factors concerning family and home life which might adversely affect the pupil's learning, social attitudes, and emotional adjustment in the school setting.

School principals encouraged members of their staffs to visit the homes of their pupils. The principals stressed the great value of such face-to-face contacts in the home setting in order for the staff to gain insights into the home conditions. In many of the schools the principals asked pupil personnel workers to share with staff members information on home conditions which they had obtained through personal visits. Social workers often assumed responsibility for interpreting such information during these staff meetings.

In Detroit the sociologist on the project staff used a copy of the census reports of population characteristics for a standard metropolitan statistical area,[1] which in Detroit includes three counties. Since the census data for urbanized areas are detailed according to census tracts, she identified the tracts contained within a single school-attendance area. Locating the school district boundaries on the tract map, she recorded the required information, including the ethnic composition of pupils and adults, median family income, occupation distribution of males and females, status of housing, and the like. The data, prepared in tabular form, were interpreted by the sociologist to staff members of the project schools, including school-community agents.

Among the specialized school personnel who gather information on home conditions in the participating schools in Philadelphia is the school nurse. The nurse maintains forms containing socioeconomic information on the families of each child in the school. These forms are prepared for the purpose of gathering information on home conditions which may adversely affect a child's learning or behavior in school. The information includes the number of family members in the household; number of children; occupation of parents, if working; weekly family income; rent paid per month; and the names of welfare agencies providing assistance to the family.

"We believe that such information is essential in helping the staff to understand the physical and emotional problems which our children and their parents bring to us," commented the principal at *Dunbar*. "The information aids the nurse in recommending to the family public and private social agencies which can help them with specific problems."

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[1] The concept of a "Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area" (SMSA) has been developed to meet the need for presentation of general-purpose statistics by agencies of the Federal Government. By definition, an SMSA must contain at least 1 city of at least 50,000 inhabitants, and must have economic and social relationships with contiguous counties.

The Division of Adult Education and the staff of *Mt. Royal* (Baltimore) conducted a 6-session institute, *Open Line: A Conversation between School and Community*. The purpose of the institute, held from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. once every 2 weeks for 6 sessions, was to define and discuss family and community conditions which affect behavior and performance of children and youth. In addition, participants in the sessions explored existing strengths and weaknesses in the family and community; formulated and discussed approaches and solutions to the problems raised; and defined the roles and responsibilities of school, family, and community agencies and groups in bringing about improvement in the lives of school children.

In the first session, classroom teachers identified adverse home and community conditions affecting the behavior and academic performance of pupils. In the second session, residents of the community, mostly housewives, identified problems from their point of view. In succeeding sessions sociologists, psychologists, and other specialists, who served as observers at the first two sessions, analyzed and interpreted their observations of the sessions, after which the entire group sought to define roles and explore possible approaches that the school could take to improve school-home relations.

School personnel during the first session of the institute had identified factors in the school that inhibited better relations with the home. At the end of the 6-week session searching questions were formulated by the school staff, including "How can we help parents become more cooperative participants in assuming their responsibilities in guiding and directing their children?" "What are the ways in which the school can make its programs and policies known to parents?"

At *Columbus* (Baltimore) a questionnaire was developed by teachers of first grade and the school counselor under the direction of the principal. The questionnaires were distributed to parents through the first-grade children in the fall. There was a 60 percent response by parents; 50 percent of the nonresponding families returned their questionnaires after a second notice. The questionnaires solicited information on marital status, occupation and salary of the father, and asked parents to check a list of places their children had visited, such as the library, zoo, museum, airport, or post office.

The tabulated responses revealed that nearly half the fathers were unskilled laborers, that 85 percent of the residents rented their homes or apartments, that 25 percent of the fathers were unemployed, that

60 percent of the male heads of families earned $50 to $100 per week. The results of the questionnaire survey were discussed at a faculty meeting and the information was used to provide enrichment experiences for both children and parents.

Catalog of Parent Abilities

Still other methods of gathering information on families in the neighborhood were employed as a means of encouraging parent participation in school activities.

At *Mt. Royal* (Baltimore) a faculty committee has set up a resource room containing maps, charts, newspaper clippings, and examples of classroom activities related to physical changes taking place in the community. The main purpose of the resource room is to help teachers keep abreast of community developments, especially the Urban Renewal Authority's plans and activities.

A file on parent occupations and special interests is kept current by a committee of the PTA and is maintained in the reference room. Classroom teachers refer to the file to invite parents to talk to the children. The interest generated by the parents' sharing of their occupations and interests in the classroom was found both informative and inspirational to the children. Parent talents or occupations are usually shared with several classes in the school. "These opportunities," commented the principal, "provide parents with status among their neighbors and serve to provide the children with important learning models."

At *Farren* (Chicago) a concerted effort is made to identify parent skills, knowledge, and talents through a questionnaire sent to the home. Parents are encouraged to share their knowledge in the classroom and participate in assembly programs.

The questionnaire, calling attention to the need for a "closer relationship between our school and our parents," asks the parents to list their hobbies, places they have traveled to, the nature of their employment, community work they have done, and related matters. Mothers skilled in homemaking projects are also urged to identify themselves. The parent is also asked to recommend neighbors who would be willing to share unusual experiences with children at school. The school principal commented, "It takes time and effort to gather and compile this information and keep it current, but it's worth it. Parents who participate in these activities are given status by their neighbors. They take a new interest in their children and in our school."

At *Dunbar* (Philadelphia) the school-community coordinator conducts a house-to-house survey to determine the occupation, hobbies, and other interests of parents. She maintains a file on parent abilities and informs teachers periodically of the contributions that parents can make by sharing their knowledge with pupils in the classroom. Some after-school classes for adults are taught by parents who were identified in the survey. An after-school class in homemaking and another in sewing and mending clothes are taught by mothers.

During individual contacts with parents, staff members in the participating schools obtained information on parent abilities, skills, and talents. This task was an important responsibility of the school-community agents in Detroit and the school-community coordinators in Philadelphia.

Assisting Parents To Help Their Children in School

Because culturally disadvantaged parents tend to be suspicious of or shy with school personnel, they are often reluctant to visit the school or to intervene with school authorities in behalf of their children. Their inability to assume a complementary function in the learning process also precludes them from reinforcing academic activities in the home.

The interviewees in the participating schools called attention to the need for culturally deprived parents to recognize the nature of the demands which the school places on their children. And they pointed to the necessity of establishing practices designed to help parents learn how to participate meaningfully in the education of their children.

Help for Parents of Preschool Children

It is generally accepted that the preschool child's home experiences are important factors in his adjustment to the formal learning environment of the school. By the time a child from a marginal cultural environment enters school, his development has already been determined to a degree that makes it difficult for the school to provide him with compensatory experiences. Both his desire and capacity to succeed in school may have already been impaired.

Some of the practices designed to compensate for the preschool child's cultural deprivation depended on active parental cooperation. Special efforts were directed toward enlisting parental participation in preparing children for the formal schooling experience.

Some of the participating schools conducted organized learning experiences for the preschool child and his parents. At *Couzens* (Detroit) a nursery school program for children 3 to 5 years old attempts to improve the ability of parents in rearing their children. An effort is made to introduce the participating parents to the demands of the school program and to help them understand their role as school patrons.

The nursery consists of 2 classes of 30 pupils. Each class meets from 4 to 6 p.m. every other day in the school's daytime kindergarten facilities. Parents act as assistants to the nursery teacher assigned to each class; a ratio of 1 adult for every 5 children is maintained. The parents also attend monthly meetings of the Nursery Parents Club, which is led by the nursery teachers. Discussions of characteristics of early child growth and development are held, based primarily on the experiences and observations of the parent assistants. Parents are encouraged to pose problems which concern them about child rearing.

During the monthly club meetings, parents are led to perceive how they can provide appropriate experiences for their children at home in order to prepare them better for the formal schooling experience. In this connection, parents are taught how to read nursery rhymes to their children. The teacher demonstrates the practice and, in later sessions, the parents perform this function in a group setting. The value of conducting this and related activities at home on a regular basis is emphasized by the teachers.

The director of the nursery program observed that "after four years of constantly shifting and improving the program, we are convinced of the value of reaching parents of the children early. We have found increased parent know-how benefits their school-age children, too. Also, many of the parents, as the result of their participation in the program, have been motivated to return to school to enroll in adult education classes." He added that "the participating mother's increased knowledge of desirable child rearing practices leads to improved attitudes toward the school. This experience has a cumulative effect—other parents, the school, and the community itself benefit from the expanding awareness which a mother experiences by participating in our program."

Preschool observation classes at *Henderson* (Baltimore) and other schools, sponsored by the parent education unit of the Division of Adult Education, are designed to help parents learn methods of guiding the development of their children. "These classes," observed the supervisor of parent education, "provide children with appropriate experiences in the early years of their personality formation, when the pace of development is most rapid, but when the child is not eligible for the school's formal guidance program." The supervisor pointed out that the classes are primarily for parents; children may not attend without their parents, though parents and other adults may attend without their children.

The classes typically meet in a school building or recreation center for 2½ hours one morning each week for a 30-week period. The participating mothers in the class bring their children, aged 2 through 5, to the class. They then sit at a table observing the children participate in a variety of activities. The parents are active observers. Each mother records her observations on forms provided for that purpose which contain guiding questions: "How did a child make friends?" "How did the teacher encourage a reluctant child to participate in the painting activity?" During the final hour of the morning session, the mothers gather in a room adjoining the nursery to discuss their observations with the teacher, who points out some child development principles underlying the activities they have observed. During this period, the teacher's assistant supervises the children.

In addition, parents keep a written record of their child's behavior at home on another form, which also contains guiding questions. The teacher reads the written records each week, writes comments on them, and returns them to the mother. These annotated records, along with the teacher's evaluation of the child's development, serve as a basis for individual parent-teacher conferences on the progress of both the child and the mother in class.

The supervisor of parent education commented that the preschool observation classes provide parents with what may be called "practice teaching" in parenthood. "This is an experience much needed by all parents," she observed, "but particularly needed by parents from culturally deprived backgrounds."

After 10 sessions of observation and discussion, the mothers are given an opportunity to take turns assisting the nursery school teacher in supervising the children. "Our expectation," commented the supervisor, "is that these experiences in seeing and doing, along with the principles learned during discussion, are more likely to carry over into the parent's daily child-care practices than reading or hearing about it." Then, too, she added, "the parents have been conditioned to work closely with teachers; and learn to respect their judgment and professional skill. They become firm allies of the school."

The Adult Education Division in Baltimore also sponsors parent cooperative centers for preschool children. The division staff provides the participating parents with both preliminary training and continuing education consultation. Each mother must attend 12 to 15 training sessions before she is eligible to enter her child in a cooperative center.

The preservice training is necessary, because in the cooperative centers the parents serve as assistant teachers under the direction of a trained nursery school teacher. This training may be obtained in one of three ways: successful completion of a course in guiding children's growth, offered by the Division of Adult Education; completion of the 10-week preschool observation class described above; or attendance at a summer workshop provided by the Baltimore Council of Parent Cooperatives.

In the cooperative centers the children are provided with opportunities to develop social skills and self-reliance in a friendly environment. A staff member of the Adult Education Division commented that under these conditions, the child is provided with an effective bridge between the security and informality of home and the outside world soon to be provided by formal school life.

But most of all, another staff member of the division observed, "The parents grow in understanding of their own children and in their sense of competence as parents—through the preliminary and inservice training sessions, the assistance they provide in the supervision of children, and the group activity in planning the nursery program."

"The underprivileged young mother," commented still another staff member, "needs help in overcoming a sense of isolation and inadequacy as a parent. The cooperative structure helps to achieve this end; the participants tend to become a family of families and thus receive needed emotional support".

During preregistration for kindergarten children, which takes place in May, parents at *Henderson* (Baltimore) are informed of a series of meetings that will be held at the school, dealing with ways in which they can better prepare their child for the school experience. The meetings are planned by a committee of classroom teachers, plus the school nurse, and the home visitor and school social worker from the central office who are assigned to the school. Under the guidance of the principal, responsibilities for the presentations are assigned.

At the first meeting teachers explain to the parents some characteristics of early childhood. The talks include information about child developmental tasks. At these meetings the school nurse provides information about child health care. Parents are encouraged by the teachers to provide their children with activities which will broaden and enrich their experiences. The social worker, for example, had informed the teachers at the planning session that on the basis of her home visits, she learned that many of the children had never been in the downtown area of the city, had never been to a museum or to other public places, nor had their parents ever shopped in the downtown stores. Parents were encouraged to take their children on trips beyond the confines of the immediate neighborhood.

Some initial bus trips to the city were planned by teacher-parent groups after the meeting. Teachers accompanied the parents on the first trip and advised them about places to visit on subsequent trips to be taken on their own. During this meeting parents are advised to subscribe to a daily newspaper and to purchase popular picture-magazines for the home.

At the second meeting the social worker informs parents about her role in the school and about community resources, especially recreational and health facilities in the immediate neighborhood. At the third meeting the children in the first-grade class present a program for the parents which highlights some of the classroom activities they were engaged in when they were in kindergarten. This program includes a tour of the school; kindergarten facilities and the play area are given special emphasis.

"One of the greatest obstacles we have to overcome in enlisting parent participation in our school," observed the principal at *Henderson*, "is the fact that they are fearful and suspicious of the school setting—and of us. Many have had unhappy school experiences and they communicate their hostility to their children." Many approaches, he explained, are employed in contacting parents and maintaining a continuing relationship with them. For example, notices about meetings are left with local ministers to announce during Sunday service. In addition, members of the room mothers organization serve as volunteers to inform other parents of the meetings. They contact a certain number of parents who, in turn, agree to contact a given number, and so on. In addition, children are asked to urge their parents to attend the meetings, and notices are sent home periodically.

At *Ludlow* (Philadelphia) the school-community coordinator arranges for parents to meet in small groups of 10 to 15 persons. These parent clinics are held in the summer for parents of preschool children, of children entering first grade for the first time, and of children who have recently moved into the neighborhood.

The nurse explains the school health services and safety regulations while walking to and from school. She also explains to the parents how the school makes use of the health forms and the necessity for parents to provide accurate information. In addition she informs them about the importance of providing children with a good breakfast before sending them to school, about the nature and importance of a well-balanced meal, about the immunization shots available for their children, and about general child health care.

At the actual meetings the school-community coordinator explains his duties to the parents and informs them about community agencies which can provide them with needed assistance. He also tells them about adult classes based on their interests and needs which can be organized with a discussion leader provided by the Adult Extension Division. In addition, the counseling teacher describes his responsibilities and encourages the parents to come to the school at any time to talk to him about their children's academic or behavior problems.

A faculty committee of primary teachers at *Farren* (Chicago) developed a guide for parents of kindergarten and entering first-grade pupils. The guide is handed to parents at the annual spring get-together at school. On parent interview day the parent-teacher conference is partly based on the guide.

The guide begins, "Here are suggestions for you to help your children get ready for their first experience in school. If you will do these things at home, the children will do better in school." The sheet contains a series of reading aids. For example, under "Help Children to See: A Walk Around the Block," the following are listed: "(a) Help children to notice the changes in the seasons; observe trees, bushes, flowers, leaves, clouds, sun, and moon; (b) Call attention to trucks, buses, cars, street signs, lampposts, fire hydrants, manholes, mailboxes, telephone posts . . ."

Under the heading "Help Children to Listen and Hear," parents are encouraged to read stories and nursery rhymes to their children and to play "sound games." The guide suggests playing games with words starting with the sound of "s" during mealtime.

In addition, the parents are encouraged to converse with their children. They are urged to ask their children such questions as "What did you play outside?" "What happened at kindergarten today?" "Tell me about the children you played with today." Further, parents are encouraged to stimulate self-expression in their children by asking them a series of questions as they look at pictures in popular magazines together. Parents are also urged to count objects with their children, help them to know and write their names, develop motor control, and teach them to discriminate colors. Parents are reminded that the school staff is always happy to see them to answer questions "about what your child is doing in school or why we are doing what he tells you."

At *Doolittle* (Chicago) a series of panel discussions is held in the spring for parents whose children will enter school in September. As panel members, the parent education counselor, the school psychologist, public health nurse, and social worker discuss some of the things parents can do to prepare their children for the school experience. Parents are advised, for example, about the need for their children to know their names and addresses. They are encouraged to help their child to be aware of numbers, by counting knives, forks, and spoons at the dinner table, and performing other counting exercises at home. Parents are also encouraged to teach the child nursery rhymes and to read them stories.

Following the exchange among the panelists, parents are asked to divide into small "buzz" groups to discuss problems related to their preschool child which are of concern to them. The director of the project, the building principal, and the panelists meet with the individual groups. The parents are then asked to reassemble in a large group, and further exchange between them and the panelists is encouraged.

"Parent education," commented the director of the *Doolittle* project, "would probably fail unless democratic methods were employed. We respect the individual worth of each parent and his opinions. When we brought them together and encouraged them to share their problems with us, we were frankly amazed at the depth of their perception. As a staff, we learn as much as the parents from these exchanges—perhaps more."[4]

At *Dunbar* (Philadelphia) the school community coordinator visits the homes of families whose children will enter kindergarten or first grade in September. The coordinator visits the homes in the spring and explains to each parent what is expected of them in helping their child successfully make the transition from home to school. When necessary, she visits homes of working parents in the evening.

The coordinator emphasizes to the parents the necessity of carrying out instructions contained in a leaflet on how to prepare the child for the school experience. If parents are illiterate or semiliterate she explains the contents of the leaflet fully. At the same time, she encourages them to enroll in an adult evening class on reading, held at the school. The coordinator also uses the occasion to urge parents to attend Home and School Association meetings and to become active in other school-sponsored activities.

"My approach is direct and simple, sometimes blunt," she explained. "I tell the parents that the school is working hard to help their children succeed in school, but that it cannot do the job alone. I tell them that if they do not cooperate with the school, they are letting down their own children." She added, "They know I am their friend and that I share with them a mutual interest—the welfare of their children. They listen and cooperate."

Teacher-Parent Conferences

One of the most important means of strengthening school-home interaction is the teacher-parent conference. Parent misunderstanding, frustration, or apathy are less likely to occur in a face-to-face encounter.

At *Couzens* (Detroit) teacher-parent conferences are arranged when remedial instruction for a schoolchild is indicated. The principal sends parents a notice informing them that their child would benefit from remedial classes, which are held twice each week after regular school hours. The bottom half of the notice lists alternate hours and days of the week for an appointment with the teacher.

If the parents consent to have their child participate in the program, the teacher arranges for a conference, at which time she explains the purpose of the "Special Class Contract." According to the contract, the parents agree that if their child is accepted in the special class, they will insure that the child will attend regularly. They also agree, according to the contract, "To help their child at home as asked by the teacher." The contract concludes, "I understand that if I do not fulfill the above agreement, my child will be dropped from the class."

The assistant principal commented that the arrangement elicits from the parents a commitment to cooperate with the school in behalf of their children. "Parents are convinced of our sincerity to help their children succeed in school. The suggestions for helping their children which the teacher communicates to them by phone and subsequent conferences are favorably received by them. Their natural desire to do the best they can for their children sustains the contract arrangement."

A series of individual parent-teacher conferences are held throughout the school year at *Doolittle* (Chicago). Parents sign up for the conferences during the group meetings featuring panel discussions, described in the previous section. Parents who have difficulty in making an appointment, such as working mothers, are contacted through first-class mail or phone calls at their place of work until a conference is arranged at a mutually convenient time.

During the conferences infants and preschool children, whom mothers may bring with them, are supervised in play areas by school staff members. Refreshments are served, and the program is geared to a positive approach with parents. "We do not *demand* and talk *at* parents," observed the director of the project, "we *invite* and talk *with* them. We look upon parent education," she continued, "in very broad terms—everything from a casual meeting in the corridor to a formal group conference. To be sure," she added, "we staff members learn from these conferences, too."

The conferences are held in the school building from 8:30 to 9:00 p.m. and also during library and gym periods, when the room teacher is free of classroom duties. The child, his room teacher, and the parent education counselor participate in the conference. In addition, other consultants, such as the teacher nurse or the school psychologist, join the conference as needed. During the meetings, classroom teachers usually tell the parents about the child's progress in school and advise them on how they can help their children derive maximum benefit from their school experience.

"Our basic purpose in these conferences," commented the director, "is to gain the confidence of the parents, to help them understand that we have a common interest with them—the education, health, and welfare of their children."

At *Dunbar* (Philadelphia) parents are requested to return their child's report card to the school; conferences are then arranged with their child's teacher, who discusses with them their child's progress in school. Meetings are scheduled in advance for between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. by the classroom teacher. Working mothers are asked to inform the school principal if they cannot keep the appointment. In such cases evening meetings are arranged. The counseling teacher, health coordinator, and the school community coordinator are on hand during these hours to counsel with parents. Special attention is given to parents whose children are having academic or behavior problems.

The assistant principal at *Farren* (Chicago) commented that "parents in our community do not come to school voluntarily." In an effort to bring about closer relationships between the home and the school, a series of parent interviews were organized. Parents were invited to make an appointment with their child's teacher to promote, as the home notice says, "better understanding of your child's physical, social, emotional, and academic needs and to determine, cooperatively, ways that we can work together to develop all his capabilities."

For parents of kindergarten children, the first reporting period on Parent Interview Day involved use of a checklist which served as a pupil progress report. Under "skills" (drawing, coloring, and cutting), the teacher checked a continuum from "very good" to "poor." Under "habits," there were 10 statements such as "he follows direction," "he completes all his work," "he comes to school clean," which the teacher checks during the conference with the parent. The classroom teachers met regularly with the principal to evaluate the effectiveness of the conferences and revised the checklist accordingly.

The principal observed that parent response was so successful that parent-teacher interviews were scheduled for all grade levels at periodic intervals during the school year. "Being personally invited to come to talk about a son or daughter's academic progress, physical and emotional problems and relationships with peers in a quiet setting with the undivided attention of the teacher resulted in almost perfect attendance." And she added, "Teachers, too, gained insight regarding the family life and home background of children in their charge which they found highly useful."

At *Divoll* (St. Louis) warning notes are sent home if a child is failing in a subject. The note emphasizes that the child is "failing himself." Alternate dates are arranged for a parent-teacher conference; the note is signed by the principal. A checklist identifies pupil deficiencies, correction of which requires parent cooperation: "lack of study at home," "poorly done assignments," "frequent tardiness."

The principal at *Ludlow* (Philadelphia) observed, "Our staff makes every effort to help parents understand that we are as interested and concerned about the well-being and welfare of their children as they are." This statement was amplified by the school-community coordinator at the school, who commented that communicating with parents was based on a "we-need-your-help" approach. "We encourage parents to look upon themselves as our partners in the education of their children. When they realize that they have an important function to assume, they are receptive to specific suggestions that will aid their children to succeed in school."

This approach was underscored by a comment made by the director of the *Doolittle* project (Chicago), who said that underlying all their activities with parents is the theme "We need their assistance in educating their children." She added, "We always assume a positive approach with the parents. We establish contact with them early in the school year, and regularly confer with them about their child's progress in school in order to reduce the possibility of having to call them in after a learning or behavior difficulty has come to a head."

Generally, the school principals stressed the value of an "open door" policy in their schools. Efforts were made to set up attractive reception areas at school entrances, to have student monitors welcome visitors and direct them to the principal's office, and to have teachers available for conferences during specified hours.

In-School Group Conferences

Another method of assisting parents to assume greater responsibility for the education of their children was through large and small group meetings. These meetings provided the staff with opportunities to share general information with parents on ways of reinforcing school efforts in behalf of their children.

The primary medium for communicating with the parents in the Banneker District's "Operation Motivation" program was large group meetings of parents at the individual schools. The director of the district established a practice of meeting with parents each semester.

The purpose of the meetings is to convince the parents that school staff members are sincerely interested in promoting the education of their children; to acquaint them with specific tasks they can perform in complementing the efforts of the school in behalf of their children; to help them understand that school success is a necessary precondition to future employment opportunities; and to show, through graphic materials, the gap existing between current levels of pupil achievement and the citywide and national norms.

The director observed that merely telling parents where their children stood in relation to city and national norms was not enough. "We had to tell them in concrete terms just what they could do to help us help their children develop their potential. To that end, we developed a 'Parents Pledge of Cooperation,' as follows:"

I. I pledge that I will do my level best to help my child put forth his best effort to study and achieve in school.

I will make sure my child attends school every day on time and is sufficiently rested to be able to do a good job.

I will provide my child with a dictionary and, as far as I am able, a quiet, well-lighted place to study.

I will insist that my child spend some time studying at home each day.

I will visit my child's teacher at least once during each semester.

I will discuss my child's report card with him. *I will compare* my child's grade level with his level of achievement.

I will join the P.T.A. and attend meetings as often as I can.

II. I recognize the fact that skill in reading is the key to success in school achievement. Therefore:

I will provide my child with a library card and insist that he use it regularly.

I will give him suitable books frequently (on birthdays, holidays, and other special occasions).

I will give him a subscription to one of the weekly school newspapers or magazines.

III. I pledge to do my best to impress upon my child the fact that success in school is his most important business.

The pledge is reinforced and expanded by a sheet entitled "Hints for Helpful Parents," which lists specific tasks that parents can undertake to help their child succeed in school.

At *Dunbar* (Philadelphia) a short course for parents entitled "Helping Your Child with School Problems" was conducted by the Language Laboratory Teacher. Parents were informed about how they could assist their child to improve his reading, writing, and spelling. The children in need of such special assistance from the home are identified in periodic conferences held by staff members. Notices are sent to parents encouraging them to attend the evening classes. The school-community coordinator reinforces the invitation through personal visits to the families.

A mother's club was organized at *Carr Lane* (St. Louis) for the purpose of broadening the knowledge of parents about ways to help their children take full advantage of their opportunities in school. The evening meetings are organized by a parent-teacher committee. Outside speakers are invited to talk to parents about problems in their child's attitudes and behavior which concern them.

At *Doolittle* (Chicago) group conferences are held at regular intervals throughout the year by individual classroom teachers for parents of children in her class; larger group conferences are also held for parents of all children in a grade level. The group conferences, which take place during school time, are designed to help parents understand the school program and how they can support school efforts at home. At these meetings parents serve as hosts and hostesses, greeting people at the door, pinning name tags on them, and serving refreshments. The room conferences also serve as a means of inviting parents to sign up for individual conferences.

The parent education consultant commented, "These conferences are as useful to the professional staff as they are to the parents. It is imperative for us to know about parent attitudes toward their children's schooling, their home conditions, their concerns and needs. The more we know, the more we can help the parents."

A series of small discussion groups involving parents of seventh-grade pupils are conducted at *Jefferson* (Detroit). These sessions are conducted by school-community agents, with classroom teachers sitting in as consultants. Two group meetings, one in the early afternoon and another in the evening, are held twice each week for a 4-week period. The discussions focus on informing parents about the school program and helping them to help their children plan ahead for high school. In addition, parents are invited to raise questions about aspects of adolescent behavior which they find difficult to understand.

One of the school-community agents commented, "We felt that we tapped a vital parent need in setting up this series. We discovered that 90 percent of the parents who participated were not involved in other adult activities sponsored by the school." The agent quoted enthusiastic parent responses found in the written evaluations made by each parent at the end of the class session. "They liked the small, permissive classes," he said. He also observed that the parents who participated in these meetings told others about them, and attendance at the second series increased markedly.

A similar parent-discussion class is held at the high school which the pupils at *Jefferson* attend upon graduation. A school-community agent commented that plans are underway to establish a similar discussion group in a feeder elementary school. "In that way," he added, "we would have an unbroken line of parent-orientation classes from elementary through junior high to high school."

At *Einstein* (Chicago) the principal sends parents a notice inviting them to attend a series of meetings for the purpose of orienting them to the school. "One of our problems," she commented, "is that our parents tend to regard kindergarten as of little importance. We learned this as a result of the lukewarm response to our opening bulletin and an Open House for parents at the school." As a consequence, the principal and her staff planned and conducted a series of meetings for parents at which the parent-education consultant, the school social worker, the school psychologist, and classroom teachers discussed ways in which the parents could help their children in school.

The social worker assigned to *Henderson* (Baltimore) described her deep concern about family conditions, a concern that arose as the result of working with youngsters referred to her by teachers: "I found through home visits that children referred because of deviant behavior were illegally absent from school, hungry, untidy, and ill-clothed. They disliked school immensely." She added, "In my attempt to involve some of the parents in helping them to assume greater responsibility for their child's school adjustment, I found through individual conferences with these parents in their homes, that they knew little of what was expected of them. These homes did not provide the kinds of experience which could serve as a bridge to the school setting. The parents really wanted to be partners with the school in the education of their children, but they didn't know how to go about it."

The social worker planned with the Adult Education Department to provide a learning experience with a selected group of 10 parents whose children were having academic difficulty and behavior problems. Although normally the adult education unit does not provide an instructor for fewer than 15 parents, the smaller group could be justified, she believed, because the large families represented a disproportionate part of the school population—as many as 50 children, including preschoolers. "We attempted to change the parents' attitude toward school authority, which they were suspicious of and which caused them to withdraw from school," observed the social worker.

The class met weekly for 1½ hours in the afternoon, from February through May, under the guidance of a discussion leader supplied by the Adult Education Department, who worked closely with the social worker. Two of the mothers had eight children each. "Those two families were known to practically every social agency in the community," commented the social worker. "Their children came to school in such an untidy condition that other children rejected them."

The social worker checked periodically with the teachers and at the end of the program was able to report that the physical appearance both of parents and children improved, as did the children's behavior and motivation to learn. "This is a two-way street," she commented. "The teachers have to learn, too, and adjust their own perceptions to the realities of parent attitudes toward them and toward schooling." In meetings held with the teachers regarding the learning experience provided parents, she shared with them some observations on the underlying basis for certain parent behavior patterns. "For example," explained the social worker, "I helped the teachers recognize that parent apathy and even hostility toward school are a means of self-protection against what appeared to them to be rejection from still another institution, representing to them, authority and coercion."

Mrs. "M," the mother of eight school-age children was urged by the social worker to enroll in the class to benefit her children. Her children regularly came to school tardy, their attendance was poor, and their academic achievement was low. "After the fifth session," said the social worker, "the mother's own personal appearance improved. Gradually, desirable changes in the children became evident. First of all, they came to school on time and regularly. Then the mother took an increased interest in their progress report. And she soon began to attend parent-teacher meetings with her husband. By the end of the school year, we noted a significant improvement in physical appearance, health, and academic achievement of the children."

At *Forrestville North* (Chicago) parents of incoming seventh-grade students were sent an invitation to attend one of the three conferences held each day for a 1-week period. The letter sent to each parent explained the importance of the visit, and requested them to confirm the appointment made for them.

The principal, assistant principal, classroom teacher, counselor, teacher-nurse, and parent-teacher association president were present at each meeting. Each of them presented to the assembled parents and students an overview of junior high school life. The students were then dismissed, and the parents were provided with hints on how they could help their child succeed in school. They were encouraged to insure their child a suitable place to study, to praise their child's work when appropriate, and to take the child on trips for enrichment purposes. The audience was then divided into small groups, to which members of the staff were assigned. Parents were encouraged to raise questions provoked by the presentations.

The school-community agents at *Barbour* (Detroit) helped to organize a women's club, which meets twice a month in a faculty lounge. In an informal setting, teachers rotate as discussion leaders. Parents typically bring up problems which concern them about their child's learning or behavior difficulties. The group sponsors evening meetings which feature speakers or films. In addition, the club organized bus trips to places of interest in and outside the city.

In connection with the Women's Club, a school-community agent said, "The unstructured format and informality that we encourage helps to draw out the parents. The socializing benefits are as important as the informational advantages to parents. Before long, we find that the parents themselves are seeking structure. The idea of holding evening programs originated with them."

Other Activities

At *Carrollton* (Baltimore) an evening study center was established for the pupils in the school library and study halls. Parents were asked to assist teachers in managing the program. They were also encouraged to make use of the library for their own purposes.

At *Forrestville North*, a series of mimeographed sheets containing hints for parents is designed to reinforce the periodic group discussions involving parents, teachers, and guidance counselors. The suggestions to parents include child health care, nutrition, recreation, and guidelines for helping their children succeed in school.

Parent newsletters, which stress the parents' role in stimulating and maintaining their child's interest to succeed in school, are sent home periodically. Stress is laid on the parents' responsibility in helping their children manage their time at home, developing habits of regular study, responding to their children's questions about matters that concern them, encouraging them to use the dictionary and reference books, and patronizing the local library. Parents are also encouraged to discuss current events at mealtime and to compliment their children on their progress in school.

At regular intervals the principal, in consultation with his teachers, sends certain parents a form letter indicating that "your child is not giving proper attention to his study habits" and asks them to insure that their child study at home for "at least a 3-hour period," to provide "a suitable place in which to study," and to see to it that "all home assignments are completed as accurately as possible." The letter is signed by both the principal and the classroom teacher. The parent is asked to sign the lower portion of the letter, tear it off, and return it to the school by his child. The single sentence reads, "I have read this letter and will see to it that my child improves his study habits." Typically, the letter is a followup to a parent-teacher conference held at the school.

A noon-hour film program was established at *Banneker* (St. Louis) for the purpose of providing children and their parents with vicarious cultural experiences. The educational film program is managed by parents, with the guidance and assistance of school staff members. Parents plan the progams, preview the movies, and watch them along with the children.

Through school exhibits, book fairs, and PTA meetings featuring movies and speakers, parents in the participating schools are encouraged to insure that their children are provided every opportunity to succeed in school. Parents are urged to give books for presents, to take children on excursions outside the neighborhood, to listen to worthwhile broadcasts and watch recommended telecasts, to attend selected movies, and they are invited to view assembly programs designed to inspire and provide them with needed information.

Other schools send home notices suggesting to parents ways of helping their child succeed in school. One notice cautions the parents to help their children use clear, correct speech ("a child must hear the right sounds and associate them with the right letters"); provide him with rich experiences ("listening-and-looking walks, trips to the zoos, parks, shopping centers, libraries, farms, and fairs are sources of good experiences"); stimulate his imagination ("Begin simple stories and let the child suggest what may happen next").

Similar notices to parents issued by other schools encourage them to respond when a child asks questions; to give him small tasks that develop his self-confidence; to listen to his description of events that took place during the day; and to set a good example in their own speech, behavior, and values.

In many of the schools "culminating classroom activities" provided opportunities to invite parents to attend school functions. Parents were invited to attend classes where children reported their activities in connection with a unit of work (Baltimore); to attend assemblies where pupils were honored for academic, athletic, or musical accomplishments (Philadelphia); and to attend evening programs where children displayed articles made in class (Detroit).

Assisting Parents To Develop Their Abilities and Improve Home and Community Life

Besides attempting to enlist parent participation in the education of their children, some of the participating schools maintained programs and services for adults to help them overcome their own cultural and social deprivation. Adults were assisted to become more knowledgeable and effective citizens, parents, and community leaders. The interviewees suggested that involvement in such activities assisted adults to take a greater interest in improving the schools and that such efforts had a positive effect on their children's attitudes toward schooling. The variety of adult educational, social, and cultural needs was met through formally organized classes, informal discussion groups and clubs, demonstrations, excursions, and related activities.

Providing Opportunities for Self-Improvement

A wide range of educational programs for adults was provided by some of the participating schools. Adults were encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to improve or develop skills as homemakers, consumers, and citizens.

Activities To Improve Abilities and Talents—Because of their educational and social deprivation, disadvantaged parents and other adults require organized activities to assist them to develop their potential.

At *Wanamaker* (Philadelphia) the staff conducted a survey of parents to determine the nature and extent of their interest in adult education classes and to identify the types of classes which adults felt would be most useful to them. As a result of the survey, evening classes were organized by the school staff, with teachers supplied by the School Extension Division of the Philadelphia Public School System. Over 300 parents enrolled in classes in the first year of the program. Classes were organized to provide concrete and meaningful experiences to enrollees. For the job seeker, there was a class in preparing for a civil service job; for persons who wished to develop or increase a skill, a class in typing and shorthand; for personal enrichment, a class in piano for the beginner and one in Spanish; for the hobbyists, woodworking; for self-development, public speaking. In addition, classes in millinery, home nursing, and budgeting were organized for the housewife.

The school principal at *Wanamaker* commented that many of the parents attended classes to gain knowledge and skills which would help them share in the school activities experienced by their children. One principal cited the case of a father who had left school after completing the eighth grade, who said, "My son is in high school. I want to improve my reading and writing so that I can read his books, talk to him about his school work and help him, if I can." The principal also referred to a parent who wanted "to learn to talk right and use good English around my daughter."

The principal cited other examples of the variety of uses to which parents had put new-found skills, uses which benefited both them and their schoolchildren. For example, after successfully completing a woodworking course, a father built a combination bookcase and desk for his daughter so that she would have a place to study in an overcrowded home. "Some pupils were reluctant to attend school because of shabby clothing," observed the principal. "Parents have taken advantage of our clothing class in order to gain experience in constructing suitable clothes for their children."

The school-community agents at *Jefferson* and *Barbour* (Detroit) assume the task of organizing adult education classes and encouraging parent participation. Classes in hatmaking, marketing, and cake decorating are provided, as are classes in the basic tool subjects—reading, writing, and arithmetic. Classes in leadership training are also available.

Concerning the usefulness of these classes to both the adults and their children, a school-community agent observed, "Through newly acquired knowledge, parents gain pride in accomplishment, and a new-found interest in improving the physical appearance of their home. They also discover the personal satisfaction of making new friends."

"Although parents are not able to articulate their needs, they can see the advantages of improving the quality of their lives which adult afternoon and evening classes can provide," commented an agent at *Barbour*. "When they take advantage of these opportunities, and find satisfaction from the experience, they share their discovery with their neighbors. As a consequence," noted the agent, "we find growing parent support of our school activities, as shown in greater participation in teacher-parent conferences, the parent-teacher organization, school assemblies, and other school-home activities." She added, "We can count on these parents to support us when we ask for their help."

At *Barbour* (Detroit) new classes for adults are formed each quarter of the year. Classes in basic reading, writing, and arithmetic are organized. For the homemaker, there are classes in sewing, hatmaking, flower arranging, cake decorating, and marketing. Courses in typing, shorthand, home modernization, and woodcraft are also available. Two-hour classes are held throughout the after-school period from 3:30 to 9:30 p.m.

A school-community agent at *Barbour* said, "We have observed, as a result of organizing and promoting these classes, that as parents become more secure in their relationships with us, and can more readily identify with the school, they take their responsibilities as parents more seriously. And, as a consequence, their children's attitudes toward academic work improves. We keep checking with teachers and note a direct relationship between parent participation in these classes and improved attitudes toward school on the part of their children."

At *Jefferson* (Detroit) adult classes are held from 4:00 to 9:00 p.m. Every effort is made to put the parents at ease in the school setting. In notices to the home, adults are informed that "Classes are very informal. No one dresses up." For children between the ages of 4 and 11, child-care centers, study lounges under supervision, and appropriate classes and clubs are provided while their parents are attending classes. For parents interested in employment opportunities, special programs are arranged to provide information on job openings and how to apply for jobs. There are also discussion groups on community problems, featuring outside speakers.

A schedule for a 2-week period in a notice sent to the homes at the time the author visited *Jefferson* follows:

Tuesday, March 6:	Social Sewing, 6 to 8 p.m. Bring your mending and coffee cup.
Wednesday, March 7:	Women's Club, 1 to 3 p.m.
Thursday, March 8:	7B Parents' Team, 2 to 3:30 p.m.
Monday, March 12:	Women's Club Constitutional Committee, 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday, March 13:	Homemakers' Club, 6 to 8 p.m.
Wednesday, March 14:	Employment Opportunities with Civil Service, 5 to 6:30 p.m. (Representatives from City and County Civil Service will be present to discuss job openings, qualifications, how to apply and be selected for civil service employment)
	Community Problems, 7 to 8:30 p.m., Subject: "Obscene Literature," Speaker from the Detroit Police Department

At *Jefferson* a school-community agent discovered that notes sent home by the schoolchildren announcing adult classes, clubs, and other activities often did not reach the parents. One means of insuring that notes reached their destination was to leave notices with cashiers in the local supermarkets, who put them into the grocery bags.

Classes for parents at *Couzens* (Detroit) include groups organized to discuss parenthood, personal improvement, how to apply for a job and find one, letterwriting, public speaking, and conducting a meeting. Also school personnel organized classes on leadership training for block clubs organized in the Jeffries low-rise housing project. In addition, school community agents formed a "Know Your City" tour group. Trips were jointly planned, with parents playing leading roles in identifying places to visit. Trips to colleges, high schools, farms, industries, and business establishments have been organized.

At *Marcy* (Detroit) parents are sent a form twice a year which asks them to check the school-sponsored activities they have attended, such as "cooking," "sewing," "dancing," "household repairs," and "home decorating," along with "reading improvement" and "child study." Possible reasons for not attending such activities are listed ("I have small children," "I didn't know about the classes," "I'm not interested in what's being offered"). The form asks parents to check activities they are interested in. Classes in "household mechanics," "child study" and "helping your child with homework" are taught by regular classroom teachers. Classes such as "home decoration," "good grooming," "how to make money and keep it" are taught by teachers supplied through the Division of Adult Education.

The parents are asked on the reverse side of the form to check the best time for them to attend the classes: 6–8, 5:30–6:30, or 7–9 p.m. They are also asked to volunteer to serve as leaders of group activities for children after school and in the evenings. The activities are directed by a classroom teacher or other professionally trained person, with parents serving as assistants. The activities include classes which range from remedial arithmetic and reading to recreation in the school gym.

The director of the project in Detroit commented that classes in shorthand, typing, speech, and leadership training provided parents with opportunities to gain communication skills which enhanced their ability to be gainfully employed. Formation of classes in arithmetic and reading stemmed from parents' requests. "They asked for 'refresher' courses in these basic skills," commented a school-community agent, "so that they could help their children with their studies."

Short-term classes in the basic skills, classes in budgeting, food preparation, furniture repair, and the like provided adults with opportunities to become more effective in household tasks, and served to bolster their self-esteem and aspirations for themselves and their children.

Out-of-School Enrichment Experiences—Parents are largely responsible for their child's acquisition of rich experiences which he can draw upon in the formal learning environment of the school. Interviewees pointed out, however, that a disadvantaged physical and social environment offers a restricted range of experiences both to parents and children. The variety of intellectually stimulating experiences provided to children by parents in more favored socioeconomic circumstances are outside the scope of activities of culturally deprived parents. Some schools attempted to overcome these cultural gaps by providing organized excursions for parents to places beyond the immediate neighborhood.

At *Barbour* (Detroit) the school-community agent makes plans with parents weeks in advance of bus trips scheduled for enrichment purposes. The time is spent in helping parents budget their money in order to save enough for the trip, in helping them to plan lunches where appropriate, and to prepare for experiences which are new to them, such as eating in a restaurant or attending a museum. The school-community agent holds both pre-trip and post-trip meetings with parents. These meetings provide her with opportunities to determine parent needs and responses to the experience, which aid her in scheduling future trips.

At *Couzens* (Detroit) trips to the city and surrounding area have included tours by boat and train and a walk along a nature trail. Trips were also made to nearby colleges and high schools and to farms, local industries and businesses, radio stations, museums, parks, and transportation terminals. A school-community agent commented on the values which parents derive from such trips: "The trips broaden the cultural horizon of parents, whet their appetite for more experiences. We encourage them to make such excursions on their own after guiding them on one or two trips. Typically, they take their children with them, and adult and child learn together."

At *Columbus* (Baltimore) the information gathered from the parent survey described on page 18 was analyzed by a committee of teachers, and was tabulated and distributed to the faculty. The knowledge that families in the neighborhood had very limited cultural experiences, mostly vicarious ones gained from watching TV, led to joint parent-teacher planning to organize enrichment experiences. The planning was done by the parent-teacher organization already in existence.

Bus trips on weekends were organized, enabling parents and children to attend concerts, ballets, and plays together. Each trip was followed up by activities in the classroom and by an appraisal of the trip at parent-teacher association meetings. Parents were also taken to a local public library, shown how to use the reference file, and encouraged to visit and use the library with their children.

The questionnaire survey had yielded the information that 90 percent of the families had television sets and watched programs regularly. This information led the committee to compile a list of programs of educational value to parents and their children. These lists were distributed to the homes through the children. The potential benefits of the programs were underscored at meetings of the parent-teacher association and at meetings of room mothers. In addition, several meetings of the room mothers group were devoted to informing parents of ways in which they could enrich their children's experiences. Using the daily newspaper as a source of information about current events and local cultural activities in the city was emphasized.

"In an encapsulated Negro neighborhood such as the one our school serves," commented the principal of *Dunbar* (Philadelphia), "the children and parents haven't been beyond their immediate physical surroundings. We provide them with opportunities to broaden their cultural horizons through bus trips." At *Dunbar*, bus trips for enrichment purposes were taken in connection with topics under study in social studies and language arts. Bus trips outside the immediate neighborhood included visits to places of historical interest, museums of art and science, industrial plants, food distribution centers, airports, parks, farms, housing developments, and libraries.

Working togther with school-community coordinators, parents played an important part in planning the trips, which were made during school hours and on Saturdays. Parents received advance instructions about what to expect while in transit and at the destination. "We wanted the parents to participate, to feel a part of what was going on, and to actively share the experience with their children," said the principal. "We didn't want them to serve as glorified babysitters."

The school-community coordinator observed that parents sought information about proper dress, ordering and tipping in a restaurant, and a variety of social situations which they had no familiarity with. The coordinator commented that the bus trips offer some parents the first opportunity they have ever had to eat a meal in a restaurant with their families. Parents are encouraged to attend museums and libraries in the city with their children. "Most of them didn't know that there was no fee required to attend public places such as museums," observed the principal. "They were concerned, in the beginning, about their attire, about saying something inappropriate. But after the initial experience, and the satisfactions derived from it, they were eager to visit other places of interest. Before long, they were making family trips to the city on their own."

At *Wanamaker* (Philadelphia) the Saturday Parent-Pupil Bus Trip Program is an outgrowth of the class trips taken during school hours by pupils and teachers. School-community coordinators, a classroom teacher, and sometimes the principal accompany parents and pupils on these trips. A classroom teacher commented, "We have run the gamut from museums to universities." She observed further that the appearance, interest, and behavior of pupils in the company of their parents on such trips showed noticeable improvement over a relatively short period of time.

At *Wanamaker* there are also evening programs designed to enrich the cultural lives of parents. There have been musical programs featuring a concert pianist, other soloists, and bands and orchestras.

As part of the school's efforts to improve the self-image of its children and their parents, Wanamaker displays in the corridors photos and works of outstanding Negroes in the arts and other fields.

In addition, parents are sent a weekly flyer entitled "Enrichment Opportunities for You and Your Children," which includes a list of suggested places to visit in the city for enrichment purposes. The flyer also lists recommended radio and television programs. In late spring, the flyers include lists of cultural, educational, or recreational facilities available to the public. Parents are encouraged to broaden and enrich their experiential backgrounds by joining the children on trips to places of cultural and historical interest.

At *Farren* (Chicago) a booklet entitled "Neighborhood Aids" was prepared for parents by the Community Relations Committee of the school staff. The booklet lists the names and addresses of health services, social service agencies, legal assistance agencies, nursery schools, counseling services, and recreational and cultural agencies in the larger community.

The school staff at *Farren* also prepared a booklet for parents of academically talented students. Entitled "Interesting Places to Visit in Chicago," it lists cultural and educational agencies and centers which can provide the students and parents with opportunities to broaden and enrich their experiences. The booklet contains a section on the arts, museums, conservatories, zoos, recreational facilities, and tours.

Strengthening Home and Family Life

As indicated in chapter II, newcomers to the city find difficulty in adjusting to the challenges of homemaking and child rearing in an urban environment. Disorientation to urban living patterns is further compounded when families are disorganized or broken. Thus, in addition to programs and services that attempt to develop and improve abilities and talents, culturally deprived parents need assistance in strengthening home and family life.

Services for the Homemaker—Among the complexities of urban life which newcomers to the city must cope with are the daily chores of shopping, meal preparation, budgeting, and related homemaking activities.

At *Ludlow* (Philadelphia) an adult evening class on family living was launched through the combined efforts of the principal, school-community coordinator, and executive committee of the Home and School Association. The school-community coordinator publicized the formation of the class through personal contact.

The class was headed by a discussion leader from the Division of School Extension. The content of the course consisted of topics of immediate practical interest to the parents, who were encouraged to inform the discussion leader of homemaking problems which concerned them. Budgeting, marketing, and meal planning were among the topics taken up.

The principal at *Ludlow* made this comment on the beneficial effects of such classes: "As they share their skills with other parents, interest in succeeding classes grows, and parents become conditioned to look to the school for practical assistance in their daily lives." He added that, as the only viable social institution in the neighborhood, the school had an obligation to bring needed educational services to parents.

One of the school-community coordinators at *Ludlow* described the close working contacts she maintains with parents during her home visits. She typically makes suggestions for improving the physical appearance of the home and encourages mothers to attend the sewing classes at school so that they can learn how to make curtains for the home. She observed, "We find that parents respond when they discover that school personnel are genuinely interested in their welfare. It is not unusual for us to find a marked difference in the physical appearance of the home when we make a return visit."

The school-community coordinator at *Dunbar* (Philadelphia) organized a demonstration on food preparation. Parents who were receiving surplus government food had expressed a need for assistance in this important homemaking activity. The demonstration was conducted by the homemaking consultant from the central office of the school system.

The purpose of the initial demonstration, held in the school building early in the afternoon, was to show parents how to prepare inexpensive meals with surplus food. The school-community coordinator assisted the homemaking consultant during the demonstration. Following the demonstration, the cooked food was consumed by the parents.

The school-community coordinator, who had visited every family in the neighborhood, commented, "I know that mothers most in need of this instruction came to the demonstration. We plan to provide food preparation demonstrations which are broader in scope in order to reach a larger proportion of parents."

The home economist serving Special Project classes at *Douglas* (Chicago) sends parents the following form letter:

> As homemakers and parents, we are faced with many daily problems. Because of our past experiences, we are able to solve some of these very easily. There are others that we cannot solve and often we would like to know to whom to turn for help. There are times when we would be happy to have someone to tell about our problem.
>
> I believe if we could get together at your convenience and discuss our problems and exchange ideas as to how we have solved some of them, it would help all of us very much.
>
> If you are interested in getting together with other parents, please fill in the form below and return it to me.

The letter contains a list of "Home Based Activities" in which the home economist provides direct assistance. Parents were asked to check the activities in order of preference, to choose between meeting with a group outside or in their home, and to indicate the hours that would be most convenient for them. The activities listed include budgeting (earning, spending, and saving money wisely); child care and development (growth and development patterns, food, clothing, diseases, recreation); home improvement and beautification (proper methods of house cleaning, furniture arrangement, color schemes); home sewing (garments for oneself or for another family member or items for the home, such as slip covers; also shopping trips for purpose of selecting patterns, sewing equipment, and material); meal planning and nutrition (planning well-balanced and economical meals).

The home economist then sends each respondent a letter indicating the date, time, and place of classes, which are usually held in the daytime, primarily in homes of parents or at a nearby community center. Parents are encouraged to bring their small children to the meetings. At the centers responsibility for the children is shared by parents; in the homes, the host parent typically supervises children activities.

The home economist observed that nearly three-quarters of the parents who responded checked "sewing" as the activity in which they wished to improve or develop their skills; second in interest was "meal planning and nutrition." The cooking demonstrations were held in a room equipped for that purpose, located at ground level of the nearby public high-rise apartment. The home economist also organized small sewing classes which met in apartments of parents.

In connection with the food preparation demonstrations, the home economist has prepared an instruction sheet on substituting ingredients ("for 1 square ounce of chocolate, you may substitute 3 tablespoons of cocoa plus 1 tablespoon of fat"); another instruction sheet is on cooking terms, and still another describes a food plan for good nutrition for children of various ages.

The home economist commented, "Such concrete services are needed and wanted by parents. We use this contact in which there is very high interest as a fulcrum to increase their confidence in the school staff and tie them more closely into our school program and services."

Also at *Douglas*, teachers and consultants prepare mimeographed booklets designed to make pupils and their parents more knowledgeable shoppers. A booklet on catalog buying, entitled "Don't Shop with Blinders on: See What You Buy," contains suggestions for wise purchasing on the installment plan. This instructional aid is used along with standard mail-order catalogs to teach addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and percentages, as well as measurement. Weights, costs, insurance and postage rates, Federal excise taxes, and service charges are computed for hypothetical orders.

The school principal commented, "Comparison shopping from different catalogs teaches judgment and stimulates discussion and critical thinking, for both the student and his parents. The units are organized so that parents assume responsibility of learning along with their children." The principal observed, "Newcomers to the city often serve as prey to sharp traders, who take advantage of their ignorance and confusion. They require specific guidance in managing their lives prudently."

The booklet on credit and installment buying emphasizes the importance of economic competence and wise money management. In the booklet the terms "carrying charges," "charge account," and "installment sales account," are defined; the practice of borrowing on life insurance or borrowing from small loan companies, and the purposes of "credit unions" are explained. The booklet contains a section on budgeting the family income, with a chart showing a sample budget for a family. Also included is a copy of a mail-order installment credit contract. In group meetings, parents are encouraged to make practical use of the information contained in the booklets.

At *Einstein* (Chicago) parents are asked to complete a questionnaire which lists classes available for parents both during the school day and after school. There are classes on "Improving Your Reading," "Learning about Books for Children," "Techniques for Rearing

Children into Good Citizens," "Managing a Budget and Saving Money," and "Preparing Meals for Children and Family." In addition, there are classes that lead to an eighth-grade diploma and short-term classes on "Filling Out Job Application Forms." There are also organized tours to places of interest in Chicago, designed to help parents broaden their horizons.

The principal stated that parent response to such opportunities increased when the invitation was reinforced through home visits by the parent education counselor, visiting teacher, and classroom teachers. "We attempt to break down the sense of alienation and isolation which is characteristic of our parents who live in high-rise apartments. We try, through these organized activities, to help them make a firmer connection with their families, our school, and the larger community."

The social worker assigned to *Henderson* (Baltimore) discovered through her home visits that many parents had never shopped in downtown stores. With the approval of the principal, she organized bus trips for parents to downtown shopping centers. Accompanying them on buying excursions, she pointed out savings available in the large stores.

Classes for Parents—The interviewees pointed out that culturally deprived parents need information and guidance to increase their competence as parents and as homemakers. They also stressed that parents sometimes experience overwhelming problems in managing household routines and rearing children in deprived circumstances.

In Baltimore the typical parent discussion group, led by an instructor supplied by the Adult Education Division, is based on the interests and problems of those enrolled. The duration of the classes and the topics discussed vary with the expressed interests and needs of the parents. The discussion groups, with 15 to 20 members, meet during school hours or in the evening. Usually, the school provides a babysitting service while the parents are attending class.

In a parent discussion group at *Henderson* (Baltimore) attended by the author, the topic under discussion was sibling rivalry. Parents were seated around a long table, some with infants in their laps. The discussion became particularly spirited when it turned to children's use of money. The leader, through skillful questioning, brought out the issues and led the parents to develop some approaches to the problem which they had not previously considered.

After the class session the discussion leader informed the author about the increased understanding of child growth and development gained by the mothers as a result of the discussion group process. She also called attention to her close working relations with teachers in following up attitude and behavior changes in the children of parents attending the classes.

The discussion leader also observed, "The value of the groups lies not only in the learning which takes place, but in the permissive climate we create to encourage discussion. The support the mothers receive from an understanding group of parents facing similar problems helps them overcome self-defeating attitudes. They discover a new-found respect for themselves as parents and as citizens." The discussion leader commented that the practice of giving each class member an office or committee assignment reinforced the individual parent's sense of worth and usefulness. She added, "We believe that increased knowledge gained from the group lends cohesiveness to the family and improves the child's motivation and achievement in school."

The single-parent family, typically with the father absent from the home, presents special problems for school personnel, because the mother is overwhelmed by her parental tasks and the schoolchild's learning and behavior tend to be adversely affected.

The Adult Education Division (Baltimore) provides group discussion classes for parents who have no spouse in the home to help in the child-rearing tasks. The "parents without partners" classes meet with leaders who not only are formally qualified to be parent-educators, but also have themselves faced the task of rearing a child alone. The Supervisor of Parent Education observed that such discussion leaders bring to the class a deep understanding of the practical and emotional problems of lone parenthood. "The parents in these groups," she added, "derive a great deal of support from each other. Indeed, they have at times continued their group meetings through the summer months when we cannot provide them with an instructor."

The disorganization suffered by families who, as a result of urban renewal programs, are transferred from slum dwellings into high-rise apartments was pointed up by the social worker at *Douglas* (Chicago): "Often the mental health problems of these persons are intensified when they move into these apartments. They have been uprooted from familiar surroundings. Their sense of physical and social isolation is acute. Under these conditions, parents without mates face especially difficult circumstances in rearing children alone."

In recognition of the acute disorientation of the children without fathers in these homes and the need for them to have a successful adult male image with which to identify and emulate, the social worker organized a "fathers" club. She had discovered that more than half the families of the project youngsters had no father in the home.

"To meet the needs of both the children and lone parent," she said, "we organized a club by asking each child in these families to bring with him an adult male who was interested in them. These persons turned out to be classroom teachers, ministers, relatives, and friends—some of whom lived with the family. We met," continued the social worker, "every 2 weeks in a nearby recreation center. We asked them about the kind of problems they needed help on and brought in consultants to provide them with needed information and socializing activities." The parent education counselor, who later assumed responsibility for that activity, participated in planning the project.

In addition, during the summer, the counselor and a classroom teacher with training and experience in social work developed a "Large Family Excursion Project," involving some 25 families, each of which had 6 or more children. The need for the project was recognized when it was discovered that many of those families had never shared activities as a family unit outside the home.

In preparation for excursions to the city by bus, the counselor and teacher helped the mothers to budget their money, select proper wearing apparel, and plan lunches. The counselor observed that parents were also eager to learn about appropriate behavior, such as tipping in a restaurant. The home economist was called in as a resource person to help develop opportunities for family members to share experiences as a family unit. The enthusiastic response of the parents toward these activities at the end of the summer led to their continuation throughout the year.

In addition, parents have been encouraged to attend the city art institute without their children and to select inexpensive reproductions they would like to have in their living rooms. The home economist assists in choosing and hanging the pictures.

Social Activities for the Family—Children form self-images and concepts of themselves from the key figures in their lives. The child's parents provide the basic models or prototypical reinforcing agents, in nearly all behavior. School-sponsored family activity outside the home is one means of promoting family "bridges" and reinforcing a child's identification with his parents. Some schools have tried to invigorate family life by inviting families to participate in school-sponsored recreational activities.

One night each week is designated as Family Night at *Jefferson* (Detroit). During these get-togethers, families participate in community singing, group games, and related group activities. The school staff uses the opportunity during the evening program to report on current class projects. Materials produced by the children in class are exhibited. Also, elements of a country fair are introduced; samples of preserves produced in adult canning class are on exhibition, and later in the evening a taste test is conducted and a prize given to the parent who made the best-tasting samples. Also at *Jefferson*, the Women's Club sponsors a Mother-Daughter Banquet. The highlight of the banquet is a fashion show which represents the culminating feature of the Adult Clothing Class.

At *Dunbar* (Philadelphia) an organization of residents called "block commanders," is responsible for maintaining contact with a fixed number of their fellow citizens. The block commanders under the supervision of the school-community coordinator canvassed the neighborhood to identify parents who possessed performing talent and were willing to perform before an audience. Commanders gave the information to the Entertainment Committee of the *Dunbar* Home and School Association, whose members compiled a resource file of parent talent. The information, which is kept current, is a means of recruiting parents to perform in an annual assembly held in the evening, called Parent Talent Night.

The principal at *Dunbar* observed that this activity "has an aspirational effect on both the children and adults." He added, "We call attention to the fact that every human being has a talent which can be developed." The programs include vocal and instrumental solos, choral groups, and combos. Spurred by the success of the first year's effort, the following year the parents presented a skit. "They seem to enjoy the experience, and they communicate their enthusiasm for finding a constructive outlet for their talents and energies to their children," observed the school principal.

The entertainment committee also sponsors Family Fun Night, devoted mainly to activities in which all members of the family can participate, such as folk dancing, group singing, and simple games.

Working for Better Neighborhoods

Civic attitudes of disadvantaged adults often raise obstacles to community improvement. Typically, they do not take the initiative in working for the well-being of their immediate community or the larger society. "Neither experience nor training enables the disadvantaged to participate in—or even to sympathize with—community efforts to solve problems of urban living. Rarely have they acquired the notion of organizing to achieve group purposes; they lack even an awareness of group needs."[2]

As may be seen in chapter II, many of the neighborhoods serv the participating schools were characterized by blight, overcro homes, dirty streets, and unedifying social activities. Exampl school efforts which attempted to motivate and assist parents t prove the physical and social deficits of the neighborhoods ar forth in this section.

Contacts With Families—The staff at *Farren* (Chicago) sponso house-to-house cleanup campaign. The "cleanup," "paintup," "l up," and "plantup" campaign involves use of a checklist for par A team of parents from the parent-teacher organization visit homes with a checklist which includes such items as "clean the yar "cover the garbage can tightly," "plant flowers in window boxes," "fix and paint fences." The campaign is carried out annually in spring. The house-to-house visits are also used to encourage pa participation in the local block or neighborhood club.

At *Banneker* (St. Louis) staff members attempted to arouse pare in the neighborhood to beautify their home surroundings. S members planted grass seed in front yards and supervised the act ties of pupils who volunteered to care for these lawns. The reside of the homes then assumed responsibility for care of their lawns accord with instructions provided by school staff members and pupils. The "demonstration lawns" impressed other residents, w sought information from the school on grass seeding and lawn ca

During parent-teacher meetings and in notices to the homes, t staff at *Carr Lane* (St. Louis) sought to enlist those parents w lived within sight of the school building to serve as "watchers" of t school and grounds. "The parents", said the principal, "developed sense of ownership toward the school, looking upon it as an exte sion of their 'property.'" He observed that vandalism directed towa school property diminished considerably within a short period time, as the parent "watchers" quickly reported to law enforceme agencies suspicious movements by persons on the school grounds.

Organized Neighborhood Groups—At *Ludlow* (Philadelphia) tl principal and the school-community coordinators organized a di cussion group with the assistance of the director of the Division o School Extension. Parents who were interested in improving tl physical appearance of the neighborhood were invited. In solicitin assistance of the parents, the coordinators stressed the importance o improving the neighborhood so that children would have a healthier and more attractive place in which to learn and play.

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[2] From *Education and the Disadvantaged American*. Washington, D.C.: National Edu cation Association and American Association of School Administrators, Educationa Policies Commission, 1962, p. 8.

As a result of a series of meetings to which city officials were invited, "Block Improvement Clubs" were organized. The clubs meet regularly in the school and promote campaigns among residents encouraging them to keep streets clean, wash pavements, establish window flower boxes, organize trash collections, and the like.

At *Dunbar* (Philadelphia) the need for a health council was discussed during a meeting attended by the school principal, the school-community coordinator, and the executive council of the Home and School Association. The presence of unsafe and unhealthful conditions in the neighborhood—unsanitary lots, dilapidated dwellings, restricted schoolyard space—led to formation of an organized group to deal with these problems.

The council is composed of three committees—one of teachers, one of pupils, and one of parents. The parents committee, under the leadership of the school-community coordinator, succeeded in having the schoolyard enlarged, in obtaining new traffic lights and signs, in having vacant houses boarded up, and in having condemned properties razed. In addition, the parents' committee helps collect clothing for needy children and their families.

As a result of their efforts, a dental clinic was set up at *Wanamaker* Junior High, located across the street from *Dunbar*. Previously, the nearest dental clinic in the city was too far away for parents to attend conveniently. In the initial period, parents set up a rotating list of volunteers, who supervised the children at the clinic and assisted the dentist until an oral hygienist was appointed. "The dental clinic was established at the very time that efforts were underway in the city to *centralize* health services," commented the principal at *Dunbar*.

This successful effort encouraged the parents to take on other projects. "When they can see a needed service for children which can be met by organized effort and have confidence in the guidance our school can give them, they work hard to achieve their goal," the principal observed. "They feel secure within an organized group through which they can express themselves and work toward a solution to a problem."

The director of the project in Philadelphia observed that attempts to organize communities in depressed urban neighborhoods frequently fail because high mobility tends to inhibit a feeling of "belonging" and because a deep-rooted distrust and fear of "authority" cause residents to be secretive and withdrawn. In addition, economic, educational, and vocational frustrations often lead to lack of initiative. "The improved rapport between school and home and the resultant organized effort to improve the neighborhood stems, in large measure, from the school-community coordinator's ability to counteract these obstacles," observed the director.

At *Columbus* (Baltimore) the principal and his staff, concerned about the disturbed state of affairs among the students and parents, formed a human relations committee consisting of school personnel and officers of the local parent-teacher association. The first step was a house-to-house visit by the school staff to enlist the cooperation of parents in helping their children plan their leisure time, to help the parents understand the importance of giving children responsibilities at home, to set a good example themselves, to take pride in their neighborhood, and to pass on the information to other neighbors.

The parents were also told that a Parent Group of the PTA of "Operation Understanding" would visit them in connection with Friendship Week. The basic purpose of "Operation Understanding" was to develop an understanding of and appreciation for appropriate ways to work, play, and live together, and to develop an increased sense of responsibility toward family, school, and community.

The efforts of the school to improve relations with the citizens in the neighborhood had come to the attention of the mayor of the city, who proclaimed "Friendship Week" for the entire city. The proclamation read in part that "whereas Columbus Elementary School has been engaged in a project, within its school community, endeavoring to establish and develop a spirit of friendship, understanding, and acceptance and whereas Columbus School will try to promote among the children and adults an increased understanding of working, living, and playing together; Whereas, their aim is, too, for a decrease in the amount of group tension resulting from crowded living conditions and to help youth and adults to acquire the ability to settle differences amicably, May 13 through 19, 1962, is proclaimed as Friendship Week." Children and adults were urged "to participate in the activities planned for this week to aid in furthering these goals."

In preparation for Friendship Week, monthly assemblies were held, with speakers and movies promoting better understanding among groups. During Friendship Week a representative of the Parents Group of "Operation Understanding" brought to the parents a mimeographed letter of introduction and a sticker saying "Join in Operation Understanding, School #99" for display in their windows.

Identifying and Developing Neighborhood Leaders

There is some evidence to indicate that low-income citizens tend to be reluctant to associate with, and become active in, community organizations, in contrast to economically and socially favored citizens who take to active organizational affiliations more easily.

The need for parent-teacher organizations, mothers clubs, community improvement groups, and related organized groups in the school and neighborhood requires a nucleus of active, energetic adults familiar with organizational processes, parliamentary procedure, and other administrative functions. In response to this need, personnel in some of the schools attempted to identify and develop the potential of citizens with leadership qualities.

Formal Training Sessions

The results of the family survey at *Columbus* (Baltimore), described in chapter II, brought to the attention of the school staff the pressing need for an organized learning experience to develop indigenous leaders in the neighborhood.

The assistance of a Community Extension Agent at the YMCA was secured to develop potential leadership qualities of selected residents of the community. Parents who played a prominent role in "Operation Friendship" were encouraged by the school staff to enroll in the leadership class held at the school.

During the class sessions, community problems were discussed, and methods of identifying and dealing with such problems through organized efforts were explored. Parent participants learned about the nature of the leadership role in group process and how a democratic leader functions.

The principal commented, "As a result of the leadership class, conducted by the YMCA Extension Agent, our parents are better able to conduct PTA and class mother club meetings." Graduates of the course have assumed leadership positions in the community; one was elected president of the local block club. The principal added, "The 15 people who were involved in this activity have gained a great deal of self-confidence, and their experience has inspired other parents to participate in the leadership training programs. An unforeseen outcome of the training," he said, "was the formation of after-school student clubs which these parents helped organize and for which they serve as advisors and sponsors." The principal pointed up the need for providing continuous leadership training. "Too often," he observed, "parents who develop into effective leaders leave our neighborhood and move to a more favored environment."

At *Harrison* (Philadelphia) the school-community coordinator and the principal discussed the possibility of developing a leadership course for selected parents. The relative stability of the neighborhood population after completion of public and private dwelling units encouraged them to undertake the effort.

Parents with leadership potential were identified by the principal, classroom teachers, and the school-community coordinator on the basis of their participation in meetings of the Home and School Association and in other school-sponsored activities.

A 10-week course was planned by the coordinator in cooperation with a discussion leader from the Division of School Extension. Classes met in the evening once each week. Resource people for the classes included personnel from the Division of School Extension and officers of the Council of the Home and School Association in the city of Philadelphia. The course emphasized the duties and function of the officers of organizations and the nature of parliamentary procedure. Role-playing served as a highly useful instructional method. Parents exchanged roles as presiding officers and members of the audience during mock meetings.

"We are gratified," commented the coordinator, "that our graduates have assumed leadership posts in many of our school activities. Their self-confidence and participation in school and community affairs have increased immeasurably as a result of this experience."

Still another effort to provide an organized learning experience for parents and other adults to develop leadership potential was described by the superintendent of District 9 (Chicago). An institute for community leaders was developed to serve the needs of newcomers to the district after a planning session with the director, the superintendent of District 9, the Citizens Information Service, and the Midwest Community Council. Two-hour classes held once each week for a 10-week period were organized to assist selected candidates to become more effective as citizens, parents, and consumers, and to develop their leadership potential so that they could exert influence in improving school and neighborhood conditions.

"Our greatest difficulty in the beginning," observed the Director of Human Relations, "was in identifying and recruiting students for the classes. We were eager to include persons of both sexes, and a wide range of ages and ethnic groups. We decided to ask local community agencies, especially school people, to bear a large part of the responsibility for recruiting adults for the course."

Persons who are contacted by workers in community agencies complete an application form which requests them to list organizations they belong to and any community work they are currently engaged in. They are also asked to identify some community problems and to list, in order of importance, the kinds of learning experience among those they are seeking that, in their view, will help them become better school and community leaders.

The focus of the course is on community problems and means of dealing with them through organized efforts of citizens. Resource persons from various public and private agencies are invited to speak at the sessions. Although the topic may call for two or three speakers, audience participation time is greater than speaker time.

The classroom sessions feature small discussion groups, which are held following the question-and-answer period. When several speakers participate in the class session, they serve as resource persons for these groups. Homework assignments are provided to help the participants develop new skills. Some assignments are based on observations of city council meetings and other organized visits to the city. The topics for the weekly classes include "The Democratic Process and Problems in Our Neighborhood," "How to Find the Facts About Your City," "How to Conduct a Meeting," "The Government of Chicago," "Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens," and "Hints for Consumers."

The Director of Human Relations commented that the adults complete the course with "increased self-knowledge and skills for taking action in community improvement. They learn the ways of accomplishing social change in an orderly fashion. People who don't have faith or skill in negotiating to alleviate social injustice feel their only recourse is the streets." He added, "Our students graduate with increased confidence in themselves, in their own ability to get things done in their neighborhoods, and in assuming more effective roles as citizens and consumers because they have had opened to them many resources previously closed."

In the Banneker District (St. Louis) the District Council of Parent Organizations consists of all officers of the local school PTA's or their elected representatives in the 23 schools. The officers of the council requested the director of the district to assist them in learning how to participate in and conduct organization meetings. As a result of this request, an instructional manual entitled "Tips on How to Conduct and Participate in a Meeting" was prepared by the Banneker District staff in cooperation with the officers of the council. Classes are held periodically for the local PTA officers as their terms of office change. "We find," commented the director of the Banneker District, "that parents derive a sense of security from this type of training. The experience increases their willingness to be active in school-related meetings and in community activities."

School-Related Activities—The block commanders (see page 49) were organized in order to multiply person-to-person relationships between school and home. The organization, which grew to 50 members within a year, assigns to the participants responsibilities for transmitting information about school matters and also uses other means to bring them into direct and regular contact with school staff members and with their neighbors.

The commanders meet regularly with the principal, who employs them as a sounding board for proposed changes and developments in the school program. At such meetings, they volunteer information on the attitudes of residents concerning unmet educational needs. The principal observed that the block commanders proved to be an effective medium of school-home communication shortly after they were organized. A reorganization on pupil promotion and placement involving parent registration on a staggered basis was to go into effect at midyear. The principal relied on the block commanders to explain the procedure to the parents. As a result, a potentially complicated and confused registration session was conducted smoothly.

On another occasion the principal, in conference with the executive council of the Home and School Association, concluded that annual graduation exercises for sixth-grade children did not justify the expenditure of time and effort required on the part of the teaching staff. A highly simplified sixth-grade assembly, it was decided, could serve the purpose. Again, the principal depended on the block commanders to reinforce, through face-to-face contact, a notice sent to parents regarding the change. "The results," he said, "were very gratifying. Parents responded enthusiastically when we explained that the time normally spent in preparation for graduation would be used for instruction of the children."

Also at *Dunbar*, the school staff considered the possibility of organizing a cub scout pack. "The school staff could foresee the benefits of such an organization to both the children and their parents," recalls the school principal, "but could it be accomplished in a neighborhood like the one *Dunbar* serves? Would enough male parents participate?"

"The male members of the faculty considered assuming leadership responsibilities themselves," the principal commented, "but the project was appropriately a parent responsibility. If parents were deprived of the opportunity to participate and develop self-confidence," said the principal, "one of the major purposes of the school-home program would be defeated." Through Home and School Association meetings and personal contacts by the school-community coordinator, a nucleus of parents who were willing to participate in the project was mobilized; the cub scout group was successfully organized and maintained.

With respect to other types of parent involvement, the principal stated, "Our experience has shown that when parents are involved in the planning and execution of projects affecting their children, when their ideas are respected, and their contributions appreciated, benefits accrue to both parent and school. Parents grow in knowledge about and concern for the school. They gain increased pride and self-respect through involvement. We provide such parents with opportunities for increased responsibility in a leadership position."

The school-community agent at *Marcy* (Detroit), in referring to the adult activities provided by the school, commented that the school staff members had to take the initiative "to get things started" by encouraging parents to participate in school-sponsored adult education classes. "When parents become involved," she observed, "they tend to develop self-confidence, feel more secure with us, and become more assertive. Before long, the parents with leadership ability come to the fore. They begin to suggest methods of improving procedures in our clubs. We quickly identify them and urge them to enroll in our leadership training class."

In the participating schools in Detroit the school-community agents, through their regular contact with parents, identify and recruit selected adults to serve in various school-sponsored activities. The agents recruit parents for membership in the PTA and other parent groups, in block clubs, community councils, womens clubs, and the like.

The sociologist on the Detroit Program staff called attention to the value of giving recognition to parents who have been particularly active in school or school-sponsored programs as a means of encouraging them to assume official responsibilities in organized school groups. The principals, school-community agents, and others in the project schools identified exceptionally active parents, who were invited to a dinner meeting in the high school cafeteria. Members of an adult class in banquet and party cooking served as waitresses.

After the meal the officials from each school and the selected parents were recognized, and the audience was then divided into small discussion groups. The accomplishments and unmet needs in strengthening school-home relations as part of the overall school program were discussed. Observations from each group were then shared with the audience. In connection with this activity, the sociologist commented, "We believe programs which recognize contributions of active parents are highly beneficial in holding their loyalty and in enlisting the aid of other parents."

Chapter IV

GUIDELINES, OBSERVATIONS, AND COMMENTS

Public schools do not exist in a vacuum; both their reason for existence and their continued operation depend in part on their social environment. This point of view and its implications for depressed urban neighborhoods require more attention from educators than they have received in the past.

1. *Adapting the School Program To Meet the Needs of the Culturally Deprived*

James B. Conant has pointed out in his *Slums and Suburbs* that "to a considerable degree what a school should do and can do is determined by the status and ambitions of the families being served." The "status" of culturally deprived parents and other adults in depressed neighborhoods is often characterized by physical, social, and economic deficiencies. And as a consequenee, their "ambitions" tend to be curtailed.

It is generally recognized that schools should provide programs and services which compensate for a schoolchild's physical, mental, and emotional handicaps. Schools in depressed neighborhoods should assume an equally urgent commitment to compensate for a child's impoverished socioeconomic background. It follows from this proposition that such school efforts should be accompanied by activities which attempt to compensate for the cultural deprivation of the child's parents.

The presence of large numbers of culturally deprived residents in depressed neighborhoods, therefore, should stimulate school staffs to examine carefully their responsibilities and opportunities for developing programs and services designed to compensate for the deprivation of both the child and his parents. The school in depressed areas, in other words, should behave differently from schools in more favored socioeconomic areas.

2. *Dealing with Unique Problems and Opportunities*

There is probably no general prescription for bringing about improved school-home interaction. Depressed urban neighborhoods present the school staff with problems quite different from those faced by staffs in more favored socioeconomic communities. Moreover, depressed neighborhoods differ among themselves. The thumbnail descriptions of the 20 participating schools in the Appendix show differences among them in size, ethnic composition, degree of population mobility, type of housing, number and types of community agencies, and so on. The schools also possess distinctive human and material characteristics. Thus, the many variables existing among the schools, homes, and neighborhoods preclude the possibility of developing a readymade solution for improving school-home relations which would be equally applicable to all school-communities.

3. *Initiating Practices To Improve and Strengthen School-Home Interaction*

The findings of this investigation indicate that culturally deprived parents tend to lack the knowledge and social skills necessary to bring about desirable changes in school, home, and neighborhood. These parents, as revealed in the interviews, were reluctant to visit the schools their children attended, did not become involved in the activities of school-related organizations, and were generally shy with school personnel and suspicious toward them. In the face of parental reluctance to take the lead in bringing about desirable change, the school staff needs to create a climate in which parents are stimulated and assisted to increase their responsibilities in improving school, home, and neighborhood.

School staff awareness of the profound effect of the cultural environment on pupil behavior, attitudes, and learning should lead to efforts to bridge the gap between school and home. If the school staff does not take the initiative in developing an action program to generate school-home interaction, it is not likely that such activity will be assumed by the parents.

In this connection, Harold Taylor refers to education as a "total process, in which the conditions of society deeply affect the child's mind, the level of his achievement, and the range of his possibilities." He further suggests, "It is no longer permissible to say that the social environment of the child is not the problem of the educator, that it belongs to city planners, social workers, economists, housing experts, or society. It belongs to everyone," Taylor insists, "but most of all to the educator."[1]

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[1] From his "The Whole Child: A Fresh Look," in *Saturday Review*, December 16, 1962, pp. 42–43.

4. *Collecting and Utilizing Information on Home and Neighborhood Conditions*

If schools in depressed urban areas need to consider ways of adapting their programs to deal with multiple needs of parents, it follows that staff development of appropriate practices needs to be based on firsthand information on home and neighborhood conditions. The character of these neighborhoods—in particular, the excessive transience of the residents—should prompt staff members to gather such information on a regular and systematic basis.

Perhaps the most effective means of gathering information on home conditions is through home visits. Classroom teachers and pupil personnel workers attached to the school can identify the distinctive socioeconomic conditions of families and thereby derive an increased awareness of the relationship of home-living patterns to pupil attitudes and behavior. In addition, school staffs can obtain information on home conditions through development and use of questionnaires, interviews, and surveys. Useful information can also be derived from census tract reports (see page 17). Administrators in these schools should insure that efforts to obtain such information serve as a means of developing appropriate practices for strengthening school-home interaction.

5. *Providing Resources for School Principals To Serve as Key Agents of Change*

The initiative for bringing about school-home-neighborhood improvement often lies with the school, but the school can rarely assume this role unless it is headed by a principal who provides creative and dynamic leadership.

In the schools visited by the author, the principals had been carefully selected to serve in schools in depressed neighborhoods on the basis of recognized competency. And they had been encouraged to attempt new and untried approaches by the chief school administrative officer of the school system. In some cases, additional staff and material resources had been provided to facilitate the introduction of such approaches.

The school principals were instrumental in developing conditions conducive to releasing the creative energies of both staff and lay citizens in working out methods of dealing with school-home-neighborhood problems. Typically, these principals acted upon the conviction that the school is a community agency which is admirably equipped and located to communicate with parents regularly and to influence their attitudes and behavior in a positive manner. The principals were also acutely aware of the need to work closely with their staffs in sensitizing them to the need of finding better ways to increase school-home interaction. Periodic group conferences in which problems were clarified and approaches explored served as an important channel of communication within the schools.

6. *Increasing Teacher Competencies and Perceptions*

The classroom teacher is the key figure in the educational process. It is vitally important for teachers serving in depressed areas to maintain a high estimate of parent potential. School principals commented that parents readily detect condescending or patronizing staff attitudes and behavior, which serve to alienate them even further from the school. Inappropriate staff attitudes vis-à-vis parents may widen the social gap between school and home. The principals said in effect, "If the staff expects little or no parent cooperation and participation in school activities, they will bring about a self-fulfilling prophecy, for parents will tend to assume the role expected of them."

Summer workshops and seminars where this and other problems are dealt with by sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and others can assist the staff to broaden and deepen their knowledge about working with culturally deprived children and their parents. Efforts can also be made to encourage teachers to enroll in college classes which will aid them in improving their competencies and illuminating their perceptions about disadvantaged citizens.

7. *Enlisting the Services of a School-Home Coordinator*

The school-home liaison persons in Philadelphia and Detroit served as extensions of the school staff in reaching into homes. The effect of their activities was to multiply contacts and increase interaction between professional personnel and lay citizens.

Schools may wish to explore the possibility of assigning trained community-organization specialists to work with parents of schoolchildren. These specialists can help the parent understand what the child is learning and why; they can also stimulate parent concern for school, home, and neighborhood improvement, which will redound to the benefit of the child in the classroom. Perhaps the most important responsibilities of the coordinator are (a) to work with parents in a meaningful program that will help them to understand that education is a basic instrument of survival and success in today's complex world and (b) to assist them to communicate this realization to their children.

If the school-home coordinators are selected on the basis of professional experience in both community organization and group-work activities, their highly useful skills can be brought to bear on the exceedingly complex and difficult problems of influencing human attitudes and behavior.

8. *Reaching Parents Through Person-to-Person Contacts*

The impersonality of urban life and the lack of social skills which often characterize culturally deprived parents should lead to school staff recognition that person-to-person contacts are needed to breach the wall of separation between school and home. All other methods of communication with parents in urban depressed neighborhoods are of secondary importance.

In the participating schools a very high value was placed on visits to the home by classroom teachers and other staff personnel. Visits gave them increased perspective and insights about home conditions that influence the learning and behavior of schoolchildren. Teachers who appreciate the effects of home life on children's school performance can shape their classroom learning procedures to the needs of the children. And parent interest and participation in school activities can probably best be stimulated through the intimate exchange that can take place in a person-to-person relationship.

9. *Establishing and Maintaining the School as a Neighborhood Center*

Staff efforts to improve school-home relations were facilitated by use of the school building as a community center. The schools served as a common meeting ground for all age groups in the neighborhood. Adult citizens were provided with opportunities to work toward objectives which they helped to develop and which were therefore meaningful to them.

The school then was looked upon by citizens and staff as community property, in both a physical and social sense. These schools extended themselves in time, by providing round-the-clock centers for citizen interaction and involvement in working toward solutions to personal and social problems. They extended themselves in space, by providing facilities and resources to all members of the community who could profit from their use. And they extended themselves in human warmth, for staff members generally were alert and sensitive to the need of overcoming the cultural barriers which often existed between themselves and the citizens they served.

10. *Providing Early Childhood Education Programs and Services*

The author was often advised during the course of his interviews that underprivileged children have typically not been exposed at home to the stimuli which develop their readiness for formal school learning. The need to provide children with opportunities for oral language development as early as possible to stimulate reading growth was especially emphasized. Principals and others pointed out that the language used in deprived homes is simpler, and that there are fewer attempts at explanation of the world, fewer qualifying adjectives and phrases, and fewer complex sentences than are typically heard in a middle-class home.

As a "downward" extension of the school, early childhood programs, perhaps beginning at age 3, can be designed to nurture the child's physical, social, emotional, and mental development. Such programs can help the child increase his auditory and visual perception, motor coordination, and concept development, and can assist him in meaningful use of language.

Parents can be brought into such programs as active observers and participants. Thus, parental support for academic achievement can be established prior to the child's formal schooling. Investment in nursery programs will probably provide a far greater social return than later programs which attempt to mitigate cultural deprivations, some of which become irreversible.

11. *Helping Parents To Assist Their Children To Succeed in School*

In the schools, staff members repeatedly observed that activities designed to increase parents' understanding of school efforts that were made in behalf of their children were essential to pupil success in school. Indeed, the schools probably gave greater priority to activities designed to help parents help their children take fuller advantage of their schooling opportunities than to any other practice. Parents were helped to recognize their unique and unparalleled opportunities to participate in the educational process. School staff members generally acted on the assumption that parents were willing, even eager, to help their children, but lacked the knowledge and experience necessary for supporting school activities.

The practices suggest that inschool group meetings can be useful in providing parents with specific suggestions on how they can help their children to succeed in school. The relationship of schooling to employment, of high pupil motivation to school success, of desirable home study conditions to academic performance can be communicated to parents in ways which are directly meaningful to them.

12. *Assisting Housewives To Improve Homemaking Skills*

Housewives need direct and practical help on a variety of household tasks. Such assistance to mothers, based on their expressed needs, can be provided by specialized personnel from the central office who are assigned to the school. Homemaking services are probably most effective when brought to the parents in group meetings held at the school, a nearby community center, or in a space set aside for that purpose in public housing units.

Homemaking services may encompass the following: a) teaching the housewife to derive maximum benefit from limited finances through intelligent marketing, shopping, installment buying, and the like; b) giving assistance in organizing household routines; and c) providing information on these and related services available from other community agencies. Many of the interviewees indicated that school efforts to improve home living conditions contributed to improved pupil attitudes and performance in school.

13. *Providing Parents with a Wide Range of Educational Programs and Services*

Schools can provide a host of day, evening, Saturday, and summer classes for parents and other adults in the neighborhood. Classes in basic skills can help parents free themselves from chronic social dependency, unemployment, and personal deprivation. School personnel, with their ready access to the home, can identify adults who need such assistance.

And adult discussion groups covering a variety of problems can be most effective when they are informally structured and when the topics to be discussed are planned *with* the members of the group rather than *for* them. Discussion topics may include proper nutrition, orientation to urban living, home and family management, rights and responsibilities of community living, neighborhood problems and issues, improvement of family relationships, and other subjects. Classes in creative and industrial arts and organized opportunities to develop hobbies and recreational activities can also be provided.

Schools can also arrange for parents to participate in excursions to places of interest outside their neighborhood—libraries, museums, art galleries, theaters, and parks. These conducted explorations of the "outside" world can provide parents with unaccustomed opportunities to observe natural beauty and works of art.

14. *Helping Parents Organize and Participate in School-Related Groups*

Many of the problems existing in school, home, and neighborhood must be dealt with through organized group effort. On the basis of the information elicited from the interviewees, culturally deprived adults appear reluctant to affiliate themselves with organized school groups. However, the findings of this study suggest that they will join together and work to achieve goals which are concrete and personally meaningful to them.

In the schools visited by the author, local units of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers tended to be effective vehicles for strengthening school-home relations. The central principle of the PTA is that the welfare of children is best served by close cooperation between the two groups most intimately and deeply concerned with children—their parents and their teachers. The natural and inevitable partnership of parents and teachers was facilitated through appropriate activities carried by that organization and similar parent-teacher groups.

Thus, participation in group efforts was especially evident when the health, education, and welfare of their children were at stake. The successful effort to establish a dental clinic in one of the participating schools (see page 51) at a time when health and dental services provided by the city's public health service were being centralized is a case in point.

Methods of identifying those parents with potential leadership abilities can and should be developed by the school staff. And this practice can be followed up by providing such parents with organized learning experience and other opportunities to develop their leadership potential.

15. *Recognizing the Need for Further Inquiries*

Current trends and projections of population mobility and shifts strongly suggest that the problems discussed in this study will continue and will probably become more intense in the years ahead. In light of this social reality, educators will continue to need information derived from research to aid them in decision-making. Moreover, if school staff members are to coordinate their efforts in improving school-home relations, there should be agreement among them on the nature of the problem.

Inquiries dealing with improvement of school-home relations in depressed urban neighborhoods may include experimental research efforts, case studies of promising practices, intensive interviews with professional and lay persons in the school neighborhoods, demonstration projects, and participant-observer studies.

Some suggested areas of study include the following: the extent of disparity between the perceptions of parents and staff on citizen participation and involvement in school activities, and the extent of disparity between the perceptions of the principal and the staff on the same matter. Since parents display varying degrees of participation and cooperation in such school-related organizations as parent-teacher groups, it might be useful also to study the characteristics of participants and nonparticipants and the extent to which parent attitudes influence pupil attitudes toward schooling, education beyond high school, and opportunities in the world of work. The factors in the home background that contribute to low pupil-motivation should also be identified.

If the school principal is the key agent of change in improving school-home relations, then more information is needed on administrative patterns of school principals. What personal and professional characteristics of principals seem to induce reticent or hostile parents to participate in school activities? What types of administrative procedures tend to release the creative energies and enlist the support of the school staff in improving relations with the home and family?

Other questions that should be further explored are these: What types of organizational patterns for citizen participation are most effective in deprived neighborhoods? What kinds of programs and services for parents and other adults should be included when new school buildings are being planned or current structures being expanded? And how can schools in depressed neighborhoods initiate or increase cooperative efforts with nonschool community agencies in the search for solutions to community problems?

Appendix A

LIST OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

	Grade range	Pupil enrollment	Opening year of school
Baltimore:			
Columbus Elementary	K–6	1,700	1890
Elmer A. Henderson Elementary	K–6	1,190	1953
Mt. Royal Elementary	K–6	750	1959
Carrollton Junior High	7–9	863	1874
Chicago:			
James R. Doolittle, Jr., Elementary	K–8	2,200	1890
Stephen A. Douglas Elementary	K–8	1,800	1955
Albert Einstein Elementary	K–4	1,200	1960
John Farren Elementary	K–8	2,700	1960
Forrestville North Upper Grade Center	7–8	1,720	1937
Detroit:			
James Couzens Elementary	K–6	1,00[illegible]	1956
Marcy Elementary	K–6	913	1912
Barbour Junior High	7–9	2,300	1921
Jefferson Junior High	7–9	1,500	1922
Philadelphia:			
Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary	K–6	800	1931
William Henry Harrison Elementary	K–6	625	1928
James R. Ludlow Elementary	K–6	1,120	1926
John Wanamaker Junior High	7–9	1,800	1959
St. Louis:			
Banneker Elementary	K–8	675	1939
Carr Lane Elementary	K–8	1,500	1958
Divoll Elementary	K–8	1,150	1872

Appendix B

DESCRIPTIONS OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Baltimore Public Schools

Baltimore is the seventh largest city and ranks sixth in pupil population in the Nation. Baltimore had 146,556 pupils in average daily attendance in 1959–60.

The four participating schools are located in the inner core of the city: Columbus and Henderson Elementary in the northeast and Carrollton Junior High and Mt. Royal Elementary in the northwest.

Columbus Elementary School. Columbus was constructed in three stages. The first structure was erected in 1890; a two-story addition was built in 1902; and in 1912, a three-floor addition was constructed. Pupil enrollment is double the capacity. Ninety-seven percent of the school population is Negro. The neighborhood consists of two- and three-story dwellings which are at least 50 years old. The neighborhood population changed drastically within a short period of time when low-income families moved into the neighborhood in large numbers. In many of the families there are seven children or more. A large number of homes are single-parent families, with the father absent.

Henderson Elementary School. Henderson is a three-story brick building built in 1953. The neighborhood consists of three-story brick row-houses and a number of commercial enterprises—small factories, garages, restaurants, and markets. In the past 10 years, low-income Negro families have moved into former privately owned homes, now converted into apartments and rooming houses. The housing units are rapidly deteriorating. Mobility within the neighborhood is excessive.

Mt. Royal Elementary School. Mt. Royal is a three-story brick building erected in 1959. Approximately 60 percent of the pupils are Negro, and 40 percent are white. The school is located in a section of Baltimore known as the Mt. Royal Urban Renewal Area. Many of the homes are scheduled to be demolished and replaced by high-rise apartment buildings and one-floor garden-type apartment buildings. Many of the families are recipients of welfare funds. About a quarter of the families are highly mobile within the city.

Carrollton Junior High School. This three-floor structure, constructed in 1874, has undergone few renovations. Located at the outer fringe of the core of the city, the area served by the school was a desirable residential neighborhood 60 years ago. In recent years the conversion of single-family homes into multifamily dwelling units has been accompanied by physical decay and substandard living conditions. Most of the homes may be classified as deteriorating or dilapidated. With the exception of merchants, the neighborhood residents are Negroes. Many houses are undergoing extensive renovations under the Urban Renewal Housing Authority Project known as Harlem Park Project.

Chicago Public Schools

The city of Chicago, second largest in the Nation, has the third largest pupil population. The Chicago public school system is divided into 20 separate districts, each containing about 25,000 pupils. Each district is headed by a superintendent responsible for the total program of education, from kindergarten through grade 12.

In September 1960, the Chicago Project, partially supported by the Ford Foundation in connection with the Great Cities School Improvement Program, was launched in District 11; the major goal of the Project was to improve the motivation and raise achievement levels of students who had unsuccessful elementary school experiences. District 11 is located south of the Loop in the east side of the city. Douglas was selected as the initial pilot school for the program.

Placing primary emphasis on boys and girls who are 14 years of age and over but still in elementary school, the school staff planned programs to raise their educational achievement and to increase their vocational competence. The project effort was extended downward in July 1961 to embrace pupils between 11 and 13 years of age who were over-age in grade placement, and upward to actively involve in practical programs dropouts in the district. Expanding horizontally, the project embraced parent groups at all levels, community and business oganization, local and citywide agencies.

Also in District 11, the Value Sharing project was begun in 1959, financed by a three-year study grant from the Wieboldt Foundation. It is a cooperative program of the National College of Education in Evanston and the Doolittle School. The project began with seven teachers, one from each of the grades 1 through 6, plus kindergarten, and with a $135,000 grant from the foundation to the college. In 1961 an additional grant of $450,000 was made and the program was expanded to three more schools, among which was Einstein.

Forrestville North Upper Grade Center and Farren are located in District 13, west of the Loop. The programs for improving opportunities for disadvantaged children in these two schools are supported exclusively through regular school funds.

Doolittle Elementary School. Doolittle, a three-story, red brick building was constructed in 1890, and wings were added in 1925 and 1945. A modern one-story structure, which has won an architect's award, was opened at the beginning of the 1962–63 school year to serve grades K–4. With the opening of the new school, grades 5 through 8 were housed in the 1925 and 1945 structures; the original building has been abandoned.

The area surrounding Doolittle is being redeveloped. Within the past few years, most of the overcrowded, deteriorating dwellings have been demolished. Many of the families which the school serves currently reside in a high-rise, low-cost housing development near the school. Pupil mobility has been high because of redevelopment in the area, but has become more stable since the opening of the new school.

Douglas Elementary School. Built in 1955, Douglas consists of a brick building with three floors. The pupil population and teaching staff are predominantly Negro. The neighborhood contains two-story dwellings most of which are overcrowded and in a state of deterioration. Demolition of some of these homes is proceeding rapidly.

Einstein Elementary School. Einstein, a three-story concrete and steel structure, was completed in 1960 to relieve the pupil enrollment pressure at nearby schools, which were on double sessions. Among the schools thus relieved was Doolittle, which had a pupil enrollment of 3,400 on double session in 1959–60. The grade levels and pupil population have changed markedly in the short period of its existence. The pupils, predominantly Negroes, live in low-cost, public, high-rise apartments, located west of the school, which were built in 1961. As many as 350 children live in one high-rise apartment. The average for each high-rise is 250 children. The apartments have five and six bedrooms to accommodate young parents with large and growing families. To the south of the school are two-story public-housing units built in 1938. East of the school, separated by a highway, are very old multiple-family dwellings, scheduled for demolition. Many pupils from those dwellings attend Einstein.

Farren Elementary School. The original Farren School was a three-story structure that opened in 1882. Additions were made in 1898 and 1937. In 1960 a two-story modern brick building was constructed. The neighborhood consists of a highly transient population living in apartments in the near-downtown sections and a more stable population living in the Southside area, where Negro residents own their homes. The completion, early in the 1962–63 school year, of a large, high-rise public-housing development, called the Robert Taylor Homes, created a substantial increase in pupil enrollment.

Forrestville North Upper Grade Center. Forrestville, a three-story brick building, was erected in 1937. The special building, designed as an upper grade center, serves an all-Negro pupil population.

Housing in the attendance area dates from the 1890's and consists of two- and three-story structures. Adjacent to the school are two high-rise public-housing units for low-income families.

Detroit Public Schools

Detroit, the Nation's fifth largest city, is fourth in pupil population, with an average daily attendance of 263,565 in 1959–60. The city school district is divided into 9 districts, each with an assistant superintendent in charge of schools from kindergarten through grade 12. The schools are organized on a 9–3 and 6–3–3 plan.

The Great Cities School Improvement Program in Detroit began in three elementary schools during the 1959–60 school year. The following year the program was expanded to include four other schools: one senior and 2 junior high schools, and an additional elementary school.

The participating schools, located in the inner city, include Couzens Elementary and Jefferson Junior High in the south district; Marcy Elementary and Barbour Junior High in the east district. The neighborhoods consist of low-cost, public housing units and overcrowded substandard multiple-family dwellings in varying degrees of deterioration. For the most part the families migrated to the city after the Second World War to fill industry's needs for unskilled labor, or are recent in-migrants from rural areas who have settled in the transitional neighborhoods of the city.

Couzens Elementary School. Couzens is a two-story yellow brick building built in 1956. The school serves children of families who live in Jeffries Homes, a low-cost public-housing development, which includes 2-story dwellings, and 14-story apartment houses. Although planned as a biracial development, the 14,000 residents are all Negro.

Marcy Elementary School. Marcy, a three-floor school building was built in 1912; an addition was completed in 1922. Mobility among the pupil population, which is 95 percent Negro, is 40 percent. The neighborhood consists of single- and multiple-family dwellings, most of which were built at the beginning of the century. Nearly 40 percent of the homes are in a deteriorated condition. About 36 percent of the population in the area own their homes.

Barbour Junior High School. Barbour was built in 1921; six rooms were added in 1960. It is the oldest school building in Detroit that was designed specifically as a junior high school. It is the largest junior high school in the State in pupil population. Ten percent of the pupil population are white; the remainder are Negroes. About 60 percent of the residents served by the school are Negroes—in-migrants from the South who began to arrive at the end of World War II. Population mobility is rather high; only 12 percent of the residents have occupied the same house since 1955. Three-quarters of the overcrowded, multiple-family dwellings, which were built before World War II, are in sound condition.

Jefferson Junior High School. Jefferson is a three-story structure built in 1922; four more classrooms were added in 1960. There is a continual turnover of students in this overcrowded school. The attendance area contains many old homes in varying stages of deterioration—apartments, flats over stores, and bars. There has been considerable redevelopment in the area in the past few years. An expressway cuts through the length of the school district. The Jeffries Homes development is in the district, and children from these apartments attend Couzens and Jefferson Junior High School. Over a 10-year period, the population has gradually shifted from white to low-income Negro families.

Philadelphia Public Schools

Philadelphia, with a 1960 population of 2,002,515, is the fourth largest city and the fifth largest school district in the Nation. Average daily attendance for the school year 1959–60 was 237,840. The school district of Philadelphia, which is coterminous with the city and county, is divided into eight school districts, each headed by a district superintendent.

As part of the Great Cities School Improvement Program, the Ford Foundation made a grant of $94,700 for the 1960–61 school year, and the school district matched this amount. The original project schools were one junior high school and three elementary schools. In September 1961 the project was extended for 3 more years and expanded to include four additional elementary schools.

The four schools participating in the study this publication is based on—Dunbar, Ludlow, Harrison Elementary, and Wanamaker Junior High—are located in District 5, in the north-central part of Philadelphia. This area, one of the oldest sections of the city, has undergone dramatic population shifts in the past decade. Currently, some 70 percent of the residents in the area are Negro, either recent in-migrants or one generation removed from the South. Twenty percent are recent Puerto Rican in-migrants. The remainder are of varied ethnic origin.

Dunbar Elementary School. Dunbar is a three-story brick structure constructed in 1931. Because of redevelopment in the neighborhood, pupil mobility is excessively high. The residents of the community are Negroes who live in substandard, three-story, absentee-owned, multiple-family dwellings. The school attendance area includes dilapidated buildings, some of which are vacant; empty lots; and part of a low-rent housing project. There are redevelopment plans for both public and private housing units.

Harrison Elementary School. Harrison is a two-story brick structure built in 1928. The school attendance area includes a variety of new dwellings: a low-cost rental public-housing unit, a recently built private home development, and a private rental unit which includes apartments and small one-story homes. There remains in the neighborhood older housing which is mostly substandard and a number of commercial buildings.

Ludlow Elementary School. Ludlow is a three-story brick building constructed in 1926. The student population is about 60 percent Negro and about one-third Puerto Rican. The school is located in the center of a densely populated area of two- and three-story multiple dwellings, many of which are overcrowded. About 25 percent of the population are Puerto Rican; the remainder are Negroes. A high percentage of the residents are receiving public assistance.

Wanamaker Junior High School. Wanamaker, a three-story structure built in 1959, is one of the newest junior high schools in Philadelphia. Nine elementary schools in the immediate area feed into Wanamaker. The neighborhood contains some of the newest housing units, as well as some of the most dilapidated, unsafe, and overcrowded homes in the city. Part of the neighborhood is undergoing extensive redevelopment, which includes private rental units and a large private ownership home development. Within the past 5 years, practically all white families have left the neighborhood.

St. Louis Public Schools

St. Louis is the 10th largest city in the Nation and 13th in size of pupil enrollment, having 86,388 pupils in average daily attendance in 1959–60. The three participating schools—Banneker, Carr Lane, and Divoll Elementary—are located in the Banneker District, in the southeastern part of the inner city. Banneker is one of the five administrative districts into which the St. Louis Public Elementary Schools are divided.

The district, which is 95 percent Negro, consists of substandard, overcrowded dwellings. The Pruitt-Igoe Housing Authority, consisting of high-rise apartments, is located in the district.

The director of the Banneker District launched a program in 1957–58, called "Operation Motivation," to raise the academic achievement of the pupils from kindergarten through grade 8. The underlying assumptions supporting the "Operation Motivation" program were set forth as follows: that IQ scores, as they are currently arrived at, are not truly indicative of the capacity for academic achievement of pupils; and that sufficiently strong and appropriate motivation can do as much to change academic apathy to energetic school activity as can drastic alterations in instruction or curriculum.

The director places great emphasis on activities designed to persuade parents to aspire to a brighter and better future for their children through education and thus inspire these children by word and deed to regard school as the best means to self-fulfillment and upward mobility.

Banneker Elementary School. Banneker is a four-story brick building erected in 1939. The neighborhood consists of two- and three-story frame and brick dwellings. Some of the houses are in an advanced stage of deterioration. Many of the families are receiving public assistance.

Carr Lane Elementary School. Built in 1958, Carr Lane, a three-story structure, has had a relatively stable pupil population. The children who attend the school live in high-rise public-housing units which were completed in 1957. A large number of the residents qualify for Aid to Dependent Children grants. The average number of children per family is 5.

Divoll Elementary School. Divoll is a three-story red brick structure built in 1872; a wing was added in 1934. High pupil-mobility reflects the excessive transience of the neighborhood population. The housing in the all-Negro neighborhood was built shortly after the turn of the century. Many of the homes, which are three-story, brick multiple-family dwellings, are in a dilapidated or deteriorating condition. There are no plans for redevelopment of the area in the immediate future. The school population also includes children who live in a high-rise, publicly financed apartment building.

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